

THE MILITANT

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'Mongoose': Kennedy's course
against Cuban Revolution

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Hundreds of Marines join desert exercise in Kuwait

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

On September 24, the U.S. Navy ships *Mt. Vernon* and *Denver* unloaded 1,000 combat marines on the Kuwaiti shore for desert exercises near the border with Iraq. Only 300 miles from Baghdad, the U.S. troops are conducting live-fire, day and night exercises, using weapons ranging from M-16 rifles to howitzers.

"We're here to demonstrate our readiness to go wherever we're needed to go," said the commander of a motorized infantry unit.

Code-named "Eager Mace," the operation is one of the sets of practice maneuvers and training programs that are playing a big role in the accumulation and preparation of U.S. forces for an air assault on Iraq and ground-based thrust toward Baghdad.

Qatar is the destination for some 600 officers of the U.S. Central Command, who are being moved from their usual posts in Florida to the expanded Al Udeid base for the "Internal Look" exercises, in which, according to the official account, they will "test the command's ability to set up a headquarters in a crisis."

Troops from Britain are holding maneuvers in Oman, where U.S. forces are also building a new airfield.

Thousands of miles away, on the West Coast of the United States, Navy officers have ordered a step-up in training and maintenance schedules for three aircraft carrier battle groups. These and other fighting ships are being made ready "to steam toward the

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Bosses threaten West Coast dockworkers with lockout

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

LOS ANGELES—Some 500 members of the International Longshore Workers Union (ILWU) held a lunchtime protest September 18 at the Long Beach facility of the Stevedoring Services of America (SSA). The action reinforced the workers' refusal to submit to the Pacific Maritime Association's (PMA) contract demands in their dispute, which has been running for almost three months. In Oakland and Seattle several hundred joined the West Coast coordinated actions on the same day.

In the past week PMA accusations of a union-organized slowdown, and threat to lock out the workers, have indicated the rising tension in the contract standoff.

From Seattle to Los Angeles, West Coast dockworkers have been working without a contract since July 1.

They have rejected PMA proposals to "bypass the hiring hall and outsource jobs," states the union. Workers have also strongly condemned government threats to enact or enforce legislation against the union if work stoppages spread.

Commenting on the September 18 protests, ILWU international president James Spinosa said that SSA's "primary interest is

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Palestinians protest after deadly Israeli copter raid

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Thousands of Palestinians mobilized in the Gaza Strip on September 24, just hours after an Apache helicopter fired on a group of Palestinians, killing nine. The attack came during a 1:00 a.m. raid on alleged weapons factories.

Several days earlier the Israeli siege and bombardment of Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat's offices in the West Bank city of Ramallah sparked an outpouring by the city's Palestinian residents. As bulldozers leveled structures in the compound and officers barked orders for those inside the building to surrender, thousands of Palestinians converged on Ramallah's central square.

Confronted by Israeli troops who fired tear gas and rubber bullets, killing two, Palestinian youth defended themselves with stones. "We're waiting for them," said one young man. "We're not afraid."

Similar protests took place in Tulkarm and Nablus, in each of which one Palestinian was killed, and Qalqilya, Jenin, and other towns in the West Bank, in defiance of Israeli troops and the curfews they enforce. In Gaza City, members of the Hamas and Islamic Jihad organizations marched alongside Arafat supporters to condemn the Israeli action.

The Gaza raids on alleged weapons-producing plants, conducted roughly every second night, involve columns of tanks, armored personnel carriers, and often a brigade of soldiers. Army officers explain that this is an effort to step up both their display and use of force, following the losses they suffered in fighting in the Jenin refugee camp in April.



Palestinians mobilize to condemn Israeli assault in Ramallah on West Bank. Above: at Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp in Lebanon. Right: students in Gaza City.

There, Palestinians fought back effectively against the Israeli drive to pulverize the town center and terrorize its residents.

"It is better to display Israel's quantitative and qualitative superiority," reported the *Ha'aretz* newspaper, summarizing the

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Protesters in Puerto Rico: free the jailed 'independentistas' and Vieques detainees

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL AND PAUL PEDERSON

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—"We have won the freedom of most of our comrades. We still have three more we must bring home," said Edwin Cortés. He was speaking at a meeting held here September 21 to demand the release of all the Puerto Rican independence fighters in U.S. prisons.

Cortés, who spent almost 20 years in prison for his pro-independence actions, was one of 11 freed in September 1999 after a years-long international defense campaign. Two others were subsequently released.

The *independentistas* remaining behind bars are Oscar López, Carlos Alberto Torres, and Juan Segarra Palmer. They are serving sentences of 70, 78, and 55 years respectively.

The meeting, sponsored by the Puerto Rican Human Rights Committee, also called for the release of five framed-up Cuban

revolutionaries—Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González—who are serving long sentences in U.S. prisons on various conspiracy charges. Their actual "crime" was infiltrating and obtaining information on counterrevolutionary groups that, operating with impunity on U.S. soil, have launched violent attacks on Cuba.

Carmen Valentín, another one of the freed independence fighters, spoke in defense of those now in prison for carrying out actions in Vieques to oppose the U.S. Navy's use of that Puerto Rican island for bombing practice. Some 1,500 people have been arrested for such civil disobedience protests since May 2000.

U.S. courts have ratcheted up the sentences for Vieques protesters arrested on trespassing and other minor charges. Helen Navarro, representing the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, spoke

about the case of Bob Rabin, a leader of the committee who has been sentenced to six months. She said he has been placed in solitary confinement.

In a related case, Pedro Colón Almenas, a pro-independence student at the University of Puerto Rico in San Juan, was framed up on assault charges for his participation in a protest at the university against the presence of the ROTC on campus. He is serving a one-year sentence, said his wife, Norma Diego, who spoke at the meeting.

Earlier that evening, dozens of people held a picket line in front of the U.S. prison in San Juan to demand the release of Vieques protesters. The pickets are held every Sat-

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New Caledonia independence fighters host event on anti-imperialist struggle

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

NOUMÉA, New Caledonia—Supporters of the fight for the independence of New Caledonia from French colonial rule took part in a seminar hosted by the Kanak Liberation Party (Palika) September 7. Entitled, "Organising the anti-imperialist struggle in times of globalization," the gathering featured presentations and discussion on the independence struggle and its connections to national liberation fights and the struggles of working people in the Pacific and across

the globe.

Leaders of Palika presented their perspectives on the fight against French imperialism.

Revolutionaries from New Zealand, Canada, and the United States were invited to contribute to the exchange of views. They were members of a *Militant* reporting team that was in New Caledonia for the best part of a week starting September 3. The visit had resulted from political collaboration leading up to and during the World Festival

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U.S. marines join Kuwait desert exercise

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Persian Gulf on short notice,” stated one news report.

Officers acknowledge that troops won’t necessarily leave the region when their practice maneuvers are officially over. Those who are scheduled for rotation out of the area may end up staying alongside their replacements, according to reports.

“The question is not what moves into the region,” said one officer. “It’s what stays.”

Along with attacks by U.S. and British warplanes aimed at rendering ineffective large pieces of Iraq’s air defense capacity, such developments indicate the administration’s “rapid march toward a decision on war,” noted the *Washington Post*.

The Pentagon’s planners do not start from scratch in massing their troops and weaponry of war in the region. Dating from the buildup to the 1990–91 Gulf War, the U.S. armed forces have stationed more than 20,000 military personnel within close striking distance of Iraq, along with military bases and naval fleets in the broader area. “The permanent U.S. military presence in the region is in stark contrast to its relative absence 12 years ago,” noted the *Los Angeles Times*.

The present U.S. military strength in the countries of the Arab-Persian Gulf—including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates—and nearby Turkey and Djibouti, along with the British colonial outpost of Diego Garcia, stands at some 30,400 personnel, according to military officials and researchers. Added to those forces are the 25,000 troops stationed on ships in the Gulf, including the *Abraham Lincoln* Aircraft Carrier Group.

In the last week U.S. commanders have sent more than 500 Special Operations soldiers to the African nation of Djibouti. They are stationed to respond to developments in nearby Yemen and Somalia, described as “potential hot spots” by government officials.

“Elite” forces like these are expected to play a major part in the Pentagon’s war plans. “Special Operations troops have been told to separate from the military temporarily and to join CIA units that could be used in any campaign,” reported the *New York Times*. The troops would engage in “covert missions,” continued the September

23 report, “while allowing the Pentagon to maintain that no uniformed combat forces were in action.”

Senior military officials told the reporter that “no American military forces were operating in Iraq.” However, they refused to say “whether the CIA was already undertaking missions there.” In Northern Iraq, U.S. operatives have been actively trying to draw Kurdish opposition forces into the war preparations.

While keeping open its options, including that of assembling a huge invading army on the half-million-strong scale of the 1990–91 assault, administration officials have tended to speak publicly in favor of an offensive by a smaller strike force. One journalist wrote that “war planners” have openly discussed an “Inside Out” plan, involving a “quick, deep strike towards Baghdad with the goal of decapitating [Saddam Hussein’s] command structure, collapsing his government and sowing chaos among his army....

“Air strikes would radiate outwards from Baghdad,” continued the writer, “while a U.S. ground force of 50,000 to 90,000 troops would seize other cities in a rapid advance from Kuwait, and possibly Turkey, to Baghdad, where they would destroy Saddam’s elite Republican Guard troops. This, in theory, would lead to a domino-effect army mutiny or mass surrender,” she concluded.

Alongside the buildup of troops and materiel, the Bush administration, backed by London, has called on the United Nations Security Council to adopt a resolution—in addition to previous such edicts—setting a deadline for Baghdad to admit weapons inspectors and threatening “consequences” if it does not comply.

Fabricated crisis, cyclone of accusations

The Iraqi foreign minister accused the Bush administration of being responsible for a “cyclone of American accusations and fabricated crises against Iraq.” Baghdad has said that it will “not cooperate with a new [UN] resolution that is different from what has been agreed upon with the secretary general” Kofi Annan.

As the diplomatic maneuvering and

Paris, Washington send hundreds of troops to Côte d’Ivoire



French army vehicle at the airport in Yamoussoukro, the capital of Côte d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast), September 24. French troop strength stood at 760 in its former colony after additional soldiers were sent there the previous day. Some 200 U.S. Special Forces were deployed to Ghana, from where they launched their intervention into Côte d’Ivoire. Both forces intervened under the guise of rescuing French and U.S. citizens caught in fighting between antigovernment soldiers and troops loyal to President Laurent Gbagbo.

preparations of inspections teams proceeded, President Bush asserted before Congress his right to “use all means that he determines to be appropriate, including force, to...defend the national security interests of the United States against the threat posed by Iraq.” A procession of White House figures have appeared before the legislators in well-publicized hearings to underline their intentions to take military action.

After Secretary of State Colin Powell told the House International Committee that the forcible conquest of Iraq would be an act of “liberation,” ranking Democratic Congressman Thomas Lantos of California said, “There isn’t a single sentence [in Powell’s speech] with which I disagree.”

“If the United Nations Security Council won’t deal with the problem, the United States and some of our friends will,” said Bush before Congress on September 19.

Diplomatic clash with Germany

U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other U.S. officials have made it clear through a series of diplomatic slights that Washington does not number its Berlin counterpart among such “friends.”

Tensions between the governments of the largest European power and its North American rival rose to the surface during the German election campaign, when Chancellor Gerhard Schröder refused to back the U.S. war drive. The dispute escalated when German justice minister Herta and Paul Daubler-Gmelin reportedly compared Bush’s foreign policy tactics to the those of Hitler. Bush’s foreign affairs adviser Condoleezza Rice described the atmosphere between the two governments as “poisoned.”

By contrast, said Rice, “We have had really excellent discussions with [French] President Chirac every time that we’ve met him.”

Following the elections Schröder has been reconfirmed as German chancellor. His Social Democratic Party, which dropped two and a half percent from its results in the election four years ago, tied with the Christian Democratic Party in the September 22 poll.

Schröder’s Green Party coalition partner ensured his reelection when its vote climbed by more than a quarter over 1998 to 8.6 percent.

Of the 120,000 U.S. troops in Europe, Washington keeps some 70,000 on German soil. In the Gulf War of a decade ago, the Pentagon relied heavily on U.S. bases at Rhein-Main, near Frankfurt, and Ramstein, in southwestern Germany. The same installations were used by the U.S. military in its assaults on Yugoslavia and Afghanistan. In spite of Schröder’s election stance, he has not ruled out the use of the bases in the coming invasion.

Even more crucial to the Washington-led imperialist war will be the numerous U.S. military installations in the Gulf oil states and elsewhere in the Middle East. While virtually all the governments in the region, save Israel, have gone on record as opposing “unilateral” U.S. action, “the reality is that some Arab nations are cooperating with preparations for a U.S. military campaign,” reported the September 23 *Washington Post*. As evidence the article cited the airfields, warehouses, and other facilities provided to the U.S. military effort by the regimes in Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

For their part, continued the report, “influential Egypt and Syria have chosen evasion as the best course... [steering] the debate away from the question of U.S. plans to overthrow Hussein to the issue of getting arms inspectors into Iraq.”

Speaking in Washington during a recent visit, Jordan’s foreign minister emphasized its “strategic, political and economic relationship with the United States.” The *Post*’s journalists, however, noted that Jordanian ruler King Abdullah has not publicized this position at home. “The king is firmly in the saddle, yet it is hard for him to even say Jordan is too weak to do anything,” said political analyst Labib Kamhawi. “Avoidance of reality is the option for now.” The majority of Jordan’s population of 5 million are Palestinians. The country is also home to tens of thousands of Iraqis.

THE MILITANT

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Uribe gov't intensifies attacks on workers

BY RÓGER CALERO

On September 10, weeks after taking office, the newly elected Colombian president, Alvaro Uribe, signed a decree authorizing the Colombian military to carry out arrests and searches without warrants, along with increased powers to install wiretaps and undertake electronic surveillance. The same day, Uribe also assumed powers to create "special zones" under military control.

These and other such measures, presented as a strategy to combat opposition guerrilla forces, have gained the backing of the U.S. government. Under the "Plan Colombia," approved by the U.S. Congress in 2000, Washington has been pouring military funds and equipment into the country, along with military advisers.

The new president's standing among working people is not so assured, however. On September 16 a nationwide one-day strike was organized to protest the effects of the worsening economic crisis and government austerity measures.

The September 10 decree handed the army brass the power to impose curfews in the new zones of "rehabilitation and consolidation." The proclamation also granted town mayors and other authorities the power to seize residences, aircraft, boats, and other vehicles if they deem such action to be necessary "to resolve a situation that can put the commu-

nity at risk." Colombia has been under a state of emergency for more than a month, which began just four days after the Colombian president took office on August 7.

In the name of financing an increased allocation of resources to the military, Uribe had earlier imposed a 1.2 percent tax on those with \$60,000 or more in assets. The \$800 million that would be collected, said Fernando Londoño, the minister of the interior of Colombia, would be used to train and equip 40,000 new troops by the beginning of next year.

The army presently stands at 200,000 troops. The new forces would boost the army presence in areas under the control of opposition guerrilla forces, he said.

Claiming that the military forces had been deliberately weakened by past governments, Defense Minister Martha Ramirez stated, "the current government is just rectifying that mistake by creating a force of the size that Colombia needs."

Bogotá also says that it will arm 15,000 peasants to aid the army in the rural based civil war.

The authorities are also beginning to implement an Uribe proposal to recruit people to what is referred to among working people as a "network of snitches." Uribe had first raised the proposal during his election campaign. His pledge to wield an "iron fist" in the "fight against terrorism" dominated the electoral contest, which ended on May 26 with his resounding victory.

Uribe's vice president, Francisco Santos, said in Washington in mid-September that the new administration was fulfilling its campaign pledge to bring "peace" to Colombia.

Washington declares support

The U.S. ambassador, Anne Patterson declared Washington's confidence in the new government during a forum at a university in Bogotá, the capital, in September. The new measures, she stated, will not endanger human rights. A couple of days earlier, Washington had authorized \$42 million in military aid to Colombia. The aid installment came after the U.S. State Department "certified" the Colombian army, clearing it of accusations of a series



Colombian soldiers confront peasants preparing to block Panamerican highway at Piendamó, Cauca. Thousands of workers and peasants marched during one-day strike September 16 to protest austerity measures announced by the new government.

of human rights violations linked to right-wing paramilitary forces tied to the regime.

Washington has used the ongoing Colombian civil war and the sizable drug trade as pretexts for a steep rise in military intervention in the broader Andean region over the last couple of years. Under both Uribe and his predecessor, Andrés Pastrana, it has provided Colombia with more than \$2 billion in military aid and training. Colombia is the third-biggest recipient of U.S. military aid, exceeded only by Israel and Egypt.

Earlier this year the U.S. Congress shifted Washington's stance of restricting the Colombian government's use of military aid to the fight against "drug trafficking." It allows the Colombian regime to deploy U.S.-supplied attack and transport helicopters and other war materiel in its fight against the opposition rebel forces. Gen. Galen Jackman, director of operations for the U.S. Southern Command, said before a U.S. Senate panel September 17 that the U.S. military needs the "flexibility to help the Colombian government with counter-insurgency equipment, training and intelligence."

Uribe is expected to request even more military aid in his scheduled visit to Wash-

ington in late September. He is also expected to ask the White House to press the World Bank and the InterAmerican Development Bank for loans to alleviate the current financial crisis confronting the country.

A protracted civil war

Colombia's nearly 40-year civil war has taken some 34,000 lives in the past four decades. Despite their brutality and Washington's generous backing, the armed forces and right-wing paramilitary units have to date been unable to deal deathblows to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), a smaller guerrilla group. The FARC, in particular, has not been dislodged from the substantial area that it controls.

The paramilitary forces, known as the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia—financed largely by wealthy landowners—have expanded their terror tactics in the last several months, massacring thousands of peasant leaders, trade unionists, and supporters of the FARC.

Leaders of trade union and peasant organizations have spoken out against the new government's attacks on working people's rights. Miguel Caro, vice president of the Central Trade Union Federation of Colombia, said on September 11 that the decree seeks to establish a "true witch hunt."

Workers take action against crisis

Some 700,000 state workers, organized by the country's main trade union federations, staged a one-day strike to protest the measures announced by the government as necessary to confront the economic crisis. The strike affected the oil industry, as well as the telephone company, government offices, schools, airports, and trash collection.

The government mobilized army troops and the police throughout the country to prevent tens of thousands of peasants who had joined the mobilizations from marching into the capital and other major cities, and from setting up roadblocks.

Colombia's three main trade union federations have made a call for a one-day general strike on October 30.



Colombian unionists resist kidnappings and terror tactics of army-backed rightist groups

BY YONATAN MOSQUERA

LONDON—"We have never been given anything without a fight," said Gilberto Torres, a leader of the Colombian Oil Workers Union (USO). "Today, our union fights to conquer some rights and to defend others that the government wants to take away from us with its repressive policy."

In late July Torres and César Carrillo, another representative of the USO that organizes workers employed by the state oil company Ecopetrol, conducted a speaking tour of the United Kingdom to build solidarity with the struggle for union rights and social justice in Colombia. Their UK visit enabled them to inform workers and young people about the real conditions facing working people in Colombia, and about the impact of the government's backing for right-wing paramilitary forces and its military offensive in the countryside.

That same month, Alvaro Uribe, at that time the leading candidate in the country's presidential elections, had visited the United Kingdom. At his meetings with British prime minister Anthony Blair, Uribe won promises for increased military and police collaboration with the Colombian regime. On August 7 Uribe won the presidential race on a platform of dealing decisively with the rural-based guerrilla opposition forces.

"We are sure that this type of aid is not going to be used for anything other than that of reinforcing the government's war," said Torres—a war that is used as cover for attacking working people's rights and terrorizing those who seek to fight back, he emphasized.

The much larger U.S. intervention in the region, dubbed Plan Colombia, is focused on training and arming the military forces of that South American country and other governments in the region, the unionists explained. "For every \$800 allocated under Plan Colombia," said Torres, "\$1,000 goes to the war."

The unionist added that "kidnapping is a state policy specifically directed against the trade union and people's movements in Colombia." Torres himself was kidnapped and held for 42 days in February of this year.

"As soon as the workers' movement learned of my kidnapping," he said, "workers mobilized under the USO umbrella and shut down Ecopetrol's production for 25 days to demand my release and preserve my life." Some 7,000 workers participated, he pointed out, noting that "there were several cities in the country where the fuel supplies ran out." Telecommunications workers put aside their contract negotiations—at a crucial stage in the fight for a new agreement—and joined the oil workers' action. With other workers' organizations backing the emergency struggle, Torres was eventually released.

"It is well-known that multinational companies provide backing to the paramilitaries with the government's blessing," said Torres, citing the case of Coca-Cola, where workers have started legal proceedings against the company "due to its role in the assassination of trade union leaders at the hands of the paramilitary."

The big foreign oil corporations pose a special challenge to the union organizers, said the two USO representatives. Companies forbid any trade union activity, they said, and hire workers for three- or four-month terms, thus denying them the rights that permanent workers are entitled to under Colombia's laws.

"One of the rules of the multinationals is that no worker employed by them can join a trade union," said Torres.

Unionized workers at Ecopetrol have won conditions that are markedly better than those under which such workers labor, Torres said. Consequently, "working in the oil industry is somewhat more bearable for them. For the other workers, the regime imposed by the multinationals is very hard."

César Carrillo described the history of the

oil workers' union. "USO was founded in 1923," he said. At that time, "there were no laws or regulations to recognize or legalize trade union activities. It was like this for many years," he said, until a series of struggles won legal recognition and a measure of rights.

On some important occasions, he said, the union has joined together with peasant organizations. In one case, workers and peasants worked together to back a truck drivers' wage fight. "We demanded that the government increase the price paid to the peasants for their produce, and the money paid to the truck drivers," he said.

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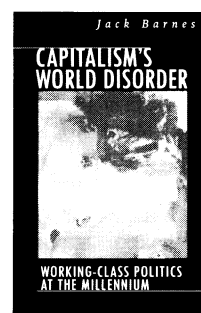
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From Puerto Rico to Chicago barbecues, ‘Militants’ are selling

BY JACK WILLEY

Socialist Workers election campaigns across the country continue to stir up interest on the streets, at campuses, protest actions, and in the factories.

In the past week candidates from New York and Illinois took their campaigns on a solidarity trip to Puerto Rico, joining commemorations of the 1868 Grito de Lares uprising for independence from Spain. Candidates Martin Koppel, for governor in New York; Paul Pederson, for U.S. Congress; and Chessie Molano, for Illinois lieutenant governor, found broad interest among Puerto Rican independence advocates in what they had to say about Washington's imperialist war aims and the unfolding world economic depression.

The candidates set up a literature table at the September 23 Grito de Lares rally, which drew a few thousand people. Thirteen *independentistas* purchased subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* and some \$200 in communist literature. Many discussions revolved around Washington's war preparations. Many participants were also interested in learning about resistance among working people to the assault on their wages and working conditions, as well as the attacks on workers' rights. The table was a few yards away from an ice cream shop, reports Koppel. The woman who owns the store was surprised to find that candidates from New York were supporters of the Puerto Rican independence struggle. She was even more interested to hear their explanation of how the anticolonial struggle strengthens the hand of the U.S. working class in fighting against a common oppressor.

She invited the candidates and their supporters for ice cream in order to talk some more and show them her photos of Pedro Albizu Campos and other independence leaders.

"I'm a patriot. It's necessary to do anything we can do from here or from the U.S. to fight colonialism," she said, as she purchased a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* and a copy of *Nueva Internacional* no. 5, which includes "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War."

The candidates also visited the island of Vieques, where Puerto Ricans have renewed protest actions demanding an end to U.S. Navy bombing practices there.

Earlier in the week the candidates had sold five *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriptions at an ecumenical fast demanding the U.S. military leave Vieques, and a picket line and benefit for political prisoners.

Chicago campaign picnic a big hit

In Chicago, workers from meatpacking and garment plants joined other supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign

New Caledonia

Continued from front page
of Youth and Students in Algeria, held in August 2001.

The socialists' remarks helped to spark interest in the Pathfinder literature that they had brought with them.

In discussing the need to build a worldwide movement to fight imperialism, the socialists recommended a number of titles—along with the *Militant* newspaper—to help uncover the "hidden" revolutionary history and battles of the working class.

Pathfinder is dedicated, they said, to presenting the lessons of current political struggles and developments, as well as those learned through the sweat and blood of fighters from battles in the past.

Through the books of the revolutionary workers movement, they emphasized, a new generation can benefit from these experiences and not have to reinvent the wheel each time the working class faces pressing social, economic and political questions.

The presentations generated a good deal of discussion. Participants asked about the experiences of revolutionaries functioning in the unions in the imperialist nations; the role played by immigrant workers in the labor movement of those countries; the fight to cancel the Third World debt; and the role of Paris's imperialist rivals in the Pacific, especially Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.

The discussion continued around the literature table that the socialist reporting team had been invited to set up. Participants pored over the recently expanded range of French-language books produced by the revolutionary publishing house. They bought five copies of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism*, and three of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, both by Jack Barnes, and five copies of *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Burkina Faso revolutionary Thomas Sankara.

Participants also purchased three copies of *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* by Carlos Tablada, and two of *The History of American Trotskyism*, along with 11 copies of the Marxist magazine *Nouvelle Internationale*, and a wide range of other titles. All told the participants in the seminar purchased some 60 titles.

of Joel Britton for governor and Chessie Molano for lieutenant governor at a September 22 barbecue in the Back of the Yards workers district on Chicago's South Side.

At the picnic were four members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1546 who work in a nearby packing plant where butchers are discussing how to fight against a speedup drive by the bosses. Part-way through the day shift the previous week, they said, the company spread a rumor that an immigration raid was imminent. About 180 of 200 workers on the day shift decided to take the rest of the day off. When the afternoon shift workers arrived, most of them also decided to go home.

Gerardo Sánchez, the Socialist Workers candidate for the 4th Congressional District and a meat packer, welcomed everyone to the picnic and introduced Joel Britton, who explained that his running mate had joined the fact-finding and reporting trip to Puerto Rico. The event helped raise funds for Molano's trip.

Britton also introduced the other Socialist Workers candidates in Illinois: Lisa Potash for U.S. Senate and Claudia Hommel for Illinois secretary of state. He condemned the U.S. rulers' war against the people and government of Iraq and outlined other points in the campaign platform. In the discussion that followed one supporter asked where the campaign stands on the issue of the death penalty. Illinois governor George Ryan is reportedly considering a commutation of some or all death row sentences before he leaves office this fall.

Britton noted that Ryan—a supporter of capital punishment—placed a moratorium on executions in Illinois earlier in his term after more than a dozen death row inmates were released from prison after being exonerated, in some cases after being locked up for more than a decade. Britton said the socialist campaign demands that the death penalty terror weapon be taken out of the hands of the rulers in both Illinois and the United States.

A student from the University of Illinois took two buses and a train from the North Side to get to the campaign event. He had purchased the *Militant* at a literature table near the campus and came to the picnic to find out more about the communist movement. After some discussion, he decided to deepen his understanding of the socialists' program, buying the Pathfinder pamphlet, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism* by Jack Barnes.

Two of the meat packers present signed up for introductory subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* and another renewed his subscription to the *Militant*. A garment worker decided to purchase four issues of *Nueva Internacional* to complete her set. One of the young Mexican workers who subscribed to *Perspectiva Mundial* also purchased *Nueva Internacional* no. 1.

Soapboxing in Washington

On September 21, three socialist campaigners from New York traveled down to join supporters of Sam Manuel for mayor of Washington, D.C., soap-boxing near the campaign headquarters. One *Militant* subscription and the pamphlet *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s* as well as several copies of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* were sold at that location.

Later in the day they took their soap-box street campaigning to Mt. Pleasant where four people picked up subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* and one bought *El desorden mundial del capitalismo*.

Another group of socialists campaigned at Howard University, selling another subscription and a couple of books. By the end of the day seven workers and youth had signed up to get more information on the Manuel for mayor campaign.

On September 21 Eleanor García, the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate, and James Harris, running in the 5th Congressional District, campaigned in a working-class neighborhood in Atlanta.

"Why can't everyone have a job?" was the question that the candidates were asked most frequently. "They say we are coming out of a recession," said a textile worker from La Grange, Georgia, "but I just don't see it."

Harris responded, "Capitalism is a system that cannot provide jobs for all. In fact capitalism cannot exist without joblessness and the competition for work among us. And now we are entering a period in which we are go-



Militant/Naomi Craine

Ved Dookhun, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate, campaigns in downtown Newark, New Jersey. Candidates are meeting working people and youth through soap-box campaigning and selling the socialist press and books by revolutionary leaders.

ing to see increasing unemployment." Campaigners sold one subscription to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

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As of week two campaigners remain on target, but now is not the time to let our guard down. Special sales target weeks, set for October 5–13 and October 26–November 5, can help local areas get ahead in the drive. *Militant* salespeople are encouraged to set up or join regional sales teams, all-day sales, and other special efforts to get ahead of schedule.

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Subscription Drive Sept. 7–Nov. 17: Week 2

Country	Militant			PM			Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold		Goal	Sold
Australia	28	3	11%	6	0		15	0
Canada								
Toronto	30	7	23%	5	0		25	2
Vancouver	30	7	23%	5	0		20	0
Montreal	15	1	7%	10	2		20	6
Canada total	75	15	20%	20	2		65	8
Iceland	9	0	0%	1	0		25	0
New Zealand								
Christchurch	12	5	42%	1	0		7	6
Auckland	20	4	20%	1	0		7	3
N.Z. total	32	9	28%	2	0		14	9
Sweden								
Stockholm	12	5	42%	3	2		5	1
Gothenburg	15	5	33%	3	0		10	0
Sweden Total	27	10	37%	6	2		15	1
United Kingdom								
London	45	8	18%	15	4		20	39
Dundee	10	0	0%	0	0		8	0
UK total	55	8	15%	15	4		28	39
United States								
Tucson	5	4	80%	1	1		5	0
Western Colorado	20	14	70%	10	4		12	7
Atlanta	35	13	37%	15	1		25	2
Seattle	40	13	33%	12	4		30	2
Des Moines	25	8	32%	12	2		12	5
Washington	30	9	30%	12	3		25	8
Upper Manhattan	50	13	26%	35	8		30	9
Brownsville	8	2	25%	2	0		6	0
Cleveland	28	7	25%	7	4		15	2
Detroit	43	10	23%	12	5		25	0
San Francisco	30	6	20%	20	8		20	7
Los Angeles	45	8	18%	30	8		30	1
NE Pennsylvania	30	5	17%	7	0		15	1
Philadelphia	25	4	16%	10	1		15	0
Newark	55	8	15%	35	8		25	5
Birmingham	22	3	14%	10	2		12	2
Houston	35	5	14%	15	0		30	4
Chicago	45	6	13%	30	9		25	10
Omaha	15	2	13%	23	3		12	3
Pittsburgh	40	5	13%	4	0		15	3
Twin Cities	55	7	13%	30	13		25	9
Brooklyn	50	6	12%	25	4		40	3
NY Garment Dist.	65	8	12%	35	4		60	1
Tampa	25	3	12%	8	1		12	0
Miami	30	3	10%	10	1		25	0
Charlotte	20	1	5%	8	1		20	0
Boston	28	1	4%	20	4		25	6
U.S. total	899	174	19%	438	99		591	90
Int'l totals	1125	219	20%	488	107		753	147
Goal/Should be	1100	220	20%	500	100		725	145

IN THE UNIONS

	Militant			PM			Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold		Goal	Sold
Australia								
AMIEU	4	1	25%				2	0
Canada								
UFCW	9	0	0%	1	0		8	0
Total	9	0	0%	1	0		8	0
New Zealand								
NDU	2	0	0%				1	0
MWU	3	1	33%				1	0
Total	5	1	20%				2	0
United States								
UMWA	25	0	0%	4	0		13	0
UNITE	50	3	6%	40	3		60	2
UFCW	50	11	22%	65	19		60	9
Total	125	14	11%	109	22		133	11
raised goal*								

AMIEU-Australasian Meat Industry Employee's Union; MWU-Meat Workers Union; NDU-National Distribution Union; UFCW-United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA-United Mine Workers of America; UNITE-Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

Stock market decline signals stagnation in Japanese economy

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Despite the current Japanese upturn—a period of weak growth driven by rising sales of cars, electronic goods, and other exports—the Tokyo stock market has continued its downward slide, registering the deep malaise in the country's economy. Loaded with bad debts and increasingly worthless stocks, the major banks are at the center of this crisis.

In early September the Nikkei stock average dropped toward 9,000, the lowest level in nearly two decades. Eisuke Sakakibara, a former top finance ministry official known as “Mr. Yen” for his aggressive intervention in Japanese monetary policy, declared September 7, “A financial crisis is unavoidable. It could happen this month, or in three to six months’ time.”

By July share prices had fallen for 34 consecutive months. From 1990 to 2000 Japanese equity prices—the prices of stocks—fell 40 percent. They have dropped a further 50 percent since 2000, and by 25 percent between May and early September of this year.

Unemployment stands at unprecedented levels for Japan, whose rulers boasted full employment—as recorded in official statistics—for several decades following World War II. Official April figures placed it at 5.2 percent, the eighth consecutive month the figure had exceeded 5 percent.

In August, 1,562 Japanese companies went bankrupt, leaving in their wake \$8.75 billion in unpaid debts. Nearly 40 percent of the debt had been held by two large companies, Chisan Co. and Gashu Enterprises.

The bad loan burden of Japanese banks amounts to more than 52 billion yen, or \$428 billion, according to official government figures. Private estimates in the banking industry put the figure higher. “Questionable loans,” reported the *New York Times*, have reached \$1.25 trillion.

The banks have been undermined not just by these loans to bankrupt or crisis-ridden enterprises and by the 11-year slide in real estate prices; they have also been hit by the sharp decline in the value of the shares that make up a big part of their assets.

The latest “remedy” under discussion is a proposal by the government-owned Bank of Japan to buy share holdings held by banks with the aim of boosting their assets and giving them, however temporarily, a better bottom line in half-year reports at the end of September.

Economy minister Heizo Takenaka called the decision “surprising” and “hard to understand.”

One Japanese-based credit analyst employed by Merrill Lynch said that the move would shift the stock-market risk from private banks to the central bank, without addressing the banks’ problem of unpayable loans. “I have no idea what the Bank of Japan is thinking,” he said.

Japan’s debt-to-gross domestic product ratio is expected to hit 157 percent this year. This means that the country’s debts stand at more than 50 percent higher than the total value of the goods and services produced by Japanese workers and farmers in a year—by far the highest such figure among the imperialist countries, including Japan’s major rivals in North America and Western Europe.

A weak, export-led recovery

Against this bleak picture, exports rose almost 9 percent in May over the same month the previous year, while the utilization of factory capacity climbed by 3.8 percent. The weakness of the yen in relation to the U.S. dollar in recent years has helped boost Japan’s trade surplus—the amount the value of exports exceeds that of imports—to more than \$8 billion. In September, however, the rise in the yen’s value to 121 per dollar from 129 in early May prompted Japan’s rulers to intervene by massively selling off yen to weaken the currency and maintain export competitiveness. Such moves have a direct impact on working people by slashing the buying power of their wages.

Wall Street Journal writer Phred Dvorak

remarked that Tokyo’s “hand-wringing over its currency, even as the yen remains relatively weak, shows how fragile the underpinnings of Japan’s nascent economic recovery may be.” Even during the recovery in the first months of this year from the most recent recession—the fourth in a decade—New York-based Moody’s International Investors Service Inc. downgraded Japanese bonds by two notches. When it was pointed out that this gives the Japanese bonds a rating worse than the African nation of Botswana, the minister of economy, trade, and industry, Takeo Hiranuma, said, “Half of the people of Botswana are AIDS patients.” He was later forced to apologize for his remarks.

Another ratings agency, Standard and Poors, recently warned that unless Tokyo moves ahead with “structural changes,” including cutbacks in government spending and a shake-up of the banking sector, Tokyo would see its ratings downgraded further. “Many... painful decisions—such as those concerning public-sector reform, fiscal policy and the banking system—have been postponed,” stated a report from the agency released August 19.

‘Put up with pain’

Japanese prime minister Junichiro Koizumi came into office in 2001 vowing to carry out just those kinds of “structural reforms”—code words for cutting the social wage, reducing taxes on the billionaire ruling families, selling off state enterprises, knocking out weaker, debt-ridden capitalist enterprises in favor of stronger ones, and other such measures. “My fundamental philosophy is that you have to put up with pain today for tomorrow’s sake,” he said.

Koizumi now faces criticism from capitalist commentators for blinking on carrying out such measures. In a typical comment, Takatoshi Ito, professor of economics at Tokyo University, said this month the

Thousands of immigrants in France march to demand legal status



Militant/Nat London

Some 10,000 undocumented workers and supporters demonstrated in Paris, Lyon, and other cities in France September 7 calling for the government to grant legal papers to all immigrants in the country. Participants in the Paris mobilization included garment workers from China, Vietnam, and Laos, a large number of them women, along with immigrant workers from a number of countries in Africa. The banner above, written in French, Turkish, Chinese, and Arabic, reads, “Collective of the undocumented of Paris.” In several cities immigrant workers have occupied churches and other public buildings. The French government has announced that it will review individual cases, but refuses to conduct a general survey of all undocumented workers in the country.

Koizumi administration is “missing an opportunity to impose real market discipline” on the banks.

Recent articles in London’s *Financial Times* have pointed unfavorably to Japan’s “relatively rigid” and “inefficient” labor market, Koizumi’s failure to “pursue his real ambition of privatizing the vast postal savings and insurance funds,” and “the overcapacity and high labor costs that have hurt Japan’s competitiveness”—terminology that will be familiar to workers around the world, who have frequently mounted, and continue

to organize, stiff resistance in the face of similar attacks from the capitalist ruling classes.

Meanwhile, Japan stands more exposed than any other imperialist power to jolts to the supply and price of oil from the Middle East that could result from the Washington-led drive to war against Iraq. While the government has reduced the economy’s dependence on oil from 73 percent of its energy needs in the mid-1970s to 52 percent today, fully 87 percent of the oil it uses comes from the Middle East.

Who are the Cuban revolutionaries framed and jailed by Washington?

Ramón Labañino

Five Cuban revolutionaries are currently serving prison terms of between 15 years and a double life sentence after being framed up and convicted in June 2001 in a U.S. federal court.

The five revolutionaries were in the United States on an internationalist mission to defend the sovereignty of their country and the Cuban Revolution.

They gathered information on the activities of counterrevolutionary groups in Florida—organizations with a history of launching violent attacks on Cuba from U.S. soil.

The groups have been able to operate with impunity from Florida, often with the assistance of, training by, and funding from Washington.

Unable to prove any illegal acts by the five men, the federal government pushed through convictions on a series of conspiracy charges, including conspiracy to act as an unregistered agent of a foreign power, to commit espionage, and to commit murder.

The five are René González, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González.

An international campaign is being waged by various organizations to explain the truth about the cases of the five Cubans and to demand they be released from prison. Extensive information on this fight can be found at themilitant.com.

The *Militant* is running short biographical sketches of each of the five. The biographies of Gerardo Hernández and René González, Fernando González and Antonio Guerrero have appeared in previous issues.

Following is the biography of Ramón Labañino.

“It’s not Cuba that has come to the United States for the purpose of an invasion, aggression, or terrorist acts of all kinds. The reality is the complete opposite. Quite simply, Cuba has the basic right to defend itself. That is all we have done, without causing harm to anyone or anything,” said Ramón Labañino in his closing statement to a U.S. court on December 13, 2001.

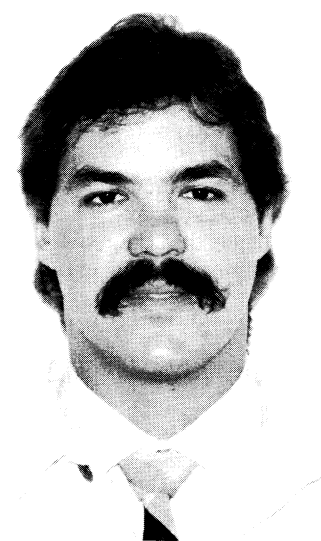
The Cuban revolutionary is serving a life sentence on frame-up conspiracy charges for his activities in defending his country and its revolution.

Born June 9, 1963, into a peasant family in Marianao, Havana Province, Labañino became a member of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba in 1987. The next year he took up duties as an officer of Cuba’s Ministry of the Interior. He has assumed leadership responsibilities in the Communist Party, which he became a member of in 1991.

In the 1980s Labañino studied at the University of Havana, where he graduated as an economist. He was also a successful student in the university’s military faculty.

All his life Labañino has been an enthusiastic participant in, and organizer of, sporting activities. He practices karate and participated in the Caribbean games as a student. At the federal prison in Beaumont, Texas, he has already earned the title of handball champion.

Labañino took up in an internationalist mission in the United States in the early 1990s. As with the other four revolutionaries, Labañino’s assignment was unknown to his relatives. “I never knew of the work he was doing. He never talked to me about it and I never asked. Since he was very young he has always known what to do and has



Granma

Ramón Labañino

always done the right thing,” said his father, Holmes Labañino.

Ramón’s mother, Nereida, who died four years ago, had been a collaborator of the Rebel Army in Oriente province in her youth.

In a letter to his wife after his arrest, Labañino described what the four revolutionaries have been confronted with in the U.S. “justice” system. “As I always told you,” he wrote, “here you have to be prepared for everything. There is a lot of manipulation, deceit, and distortion of the facts.”

“But we are confident that the truth will come forward,” added the imprisoned revolutionary and patriot. “What is important is to fight this fight well, and put our truth on the table.... We will not abandon our defenses no matter who we are dealing with. Our country deserves respect, and whoever it is should understand that.”

1990–91 in Gulf: a U.S.-led war for Big Oil

Printed below are excerpts from “The Working-class Campaign against Imperialism and War,” an article by Jack Barnes that appears in *New Internationalist* no. 7. The article is based on talks presented by Barnes in November 1990, three months after Washington imposed a blockade on Iraq following Baghdad’s invasion of Kuwait, and two months before the U.S.-led imperialist forces unleashed a six-week bombing campaign. On February 24 Washington launched a four-day invasion of the country.

The one-sided assault, in which at least 150,000 Iraqis died, is described by the editors in their introduction as “one of the most massive, cold-blooded slaughters in modern history.” The U.S. rulers’ goal, they wrote, “was to impose...a reliable regime subservient to U.S. imperialism; secure greater control over oil reserves in the Gulf; [and] shift the relationship of forces against the region’s toilers, especially the Palestinian people.... In pursuing these aims, the U.S. capitalist class sought to use its military might to deal economic and political blows to its imperialist rivals in Europe and Japan.”

Washington’s failure to carry through these political aims lies behind its deepening military intervention in the region and preparations for more wars, including the one being set in motion right now against Iraq. Copyright © 1991 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp. Reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

Right now, at this stage in the rulers’ war drive, perhaps the biggest hazard that faces the working-class vanguard, including communists among them, is the danger of denial.

These hazards are compounded for those who are buffeted by the day-to-day swings and tactical divisions reflected in bourgeois public opinion. One day the news covers a tough-talking press conference by Bush—war! The next day, a sharp exchange at congressional hearings between Baker and several senators—war has been pushed back. The UN Security Council adopts a new resolution—war! The Iraqi regime releases the hostages—war has been pushed back. Several returning hostages call for bombing Baghdad—war! And so on.

The political vanguard of the working class must steel itself against such impressionistic reflexes. The workers’ movement has always faced a double problem leading up to every imperialist war.

On the one hand, the capitalists and bourgeois politicians who are themselves preparing the war always claim to be acting in the interests of peace—and of freedom, democracy, and national sovereignty as well. They are the most fervent opponents of war! They publicly agonize, as cameras roll and reporters fill up their notebooks. The bosses and politicians do this in order to maintain support for actions they must take to preserve their social system.

But it’s not just the bourgeois propaganda that is disorienting. Individuals and currents

from the petty bourgeoisie—sometimes because of the depth of their shock at the horrors of war, and their fears of its consequences—lose their moorings and get drawn into the undertow of one or another section of the war makers and their political parties. These middle-class currents have a bigger direct impact on layers of fighting workers and farmers since—unlike the employers and most bourgeois politicians—they frequently function in or around organizations of the labor movement and in broader radical politics. They often make common cause with petty-bourgeois bureaucrats in the unions and other workers’ organizations—whether social democrats, Stalinists, or the homegrown U.S. business-unionism variety. These middle-class layers, whether well intentioned or incurably corrupted, serve as a culture for the growth of all varieties of bourgeois ideas and pressures inside the working-class and labor movement.

Based on the facts, communists can provide an independent working-class answer to the question of whether the capitalist rulers are pushing us closer to war. The answer is yes. The danger of a bloody slaughter in the Middle East is greater today, and the need for a working-class campaign against the imperialist war drive is more pressing....

More nakedly imperialist

In one way, the war that is being prepared by Washington in the Middle East today is a “post-Cold War” war. That’s because, unlike any other war they’ve prepared since 1945, the U.S. rulers can’t present this one as part of the battle against communism or the Soviet threat. This too will be a pattern from here on out. The wars that Washington fights will be more nakedly imperialist wars—and imperialist in every sense of the word.

Imperialist, first of all, in the most popular sense—like imperial Rome and its legions. The legions of a dominant power that exaggerates its contributions to human culture and ideas in order to rationalize marching off to dominate other parts of the world. A war fought by an imperial army, claiming imperial rights and prerogatives for an imperial race. A war against illogical heathens with strange gods. A war aimed at economically draining, politically oppressing, and militarily subjugating another people. An imperial power—often with high-flown rhetoric and practiced apologists—that claims the right to police the world.

It’s good to use the term this way. There’s nothing wrong or “unscientific” about it. It is an imperialist war in that most classical, most popular sense. It goes back thousands of years, and rings a bell with people throughout the world.

Moreover, it’s completely accurate in another sense, too. Because Washington—the last of the world’s massive, brutal, imperial powers—is now embarking on a series of final wars to try to hold together a crumbling order, the capitalist order. And in the course of these conflicts—regardless of how long it takes—that empire will go down to defeat under the combined blows of workers and farmers at home and abroad.

War for Big Oil

It’s also an imperialist war in the popular economic sense—a war over oil. It will be a war to guarantee that the profits derived from the organization and control of petroleum remain in the hands of Big Oil, of the monopolies and the imperialist governments that defend their interests. That’s the sense in which you hear people say, “I’m not sure oil is worth a single life over there.”

We shouldn’t be hesitant to use the word imperialist in that sense, either. There’s a great deal of truth to the statement that the war is being fought over oil. It’s a battle over resources—a battle by the U.S. rulers to stop another capitalist class, in this case the Iraqi capitalists, from gaining too much control over those resources, directly or indirectly.

We should remember that the U.S. capitalists alone use 26 percent of the world’s oil production. Moreover, every aspect of the world oil market—right down to the gas pump—is highly monopolized by a handful of super-rich capitalist fami-



U.S.-led assault on Iraq in 1990–91 culminated in 48-hour bloodletting on highway between Kuwait City and Basra in the south. U.S. forces sealed off 20-mile stretch of road and bombed, strafed, and shelled the retreating soldiers and civilians on it.

lies in the United States, Britain, and other imperialist countries.

Today, while the price of a barrel of oil remains well above what it cost four months ago, substantially more is being produced, sent through pipelines, and put on tankers than prior to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In fact, in November world oil production reached a six-month high. Washington has played up information about the Saudi Arabian government bearing a big load in financing the U.S. military buildup there. But the windfall profits to the Saudi ruling families from the rise in oil prices since August 2 has produced five times as much income for them as they’ve laid out for Operation Desert Shield.

But it’s not the Saudi throne or the ruling classes of the OPEC countries that are the biggest victors of this price-gouging—although they do benefit, and at the expense of both the workers and peasants in their own countries and those in non-oil-producing countries throughout the Third World.

The big winners are the wealthy families who own the imperialist oil monopolies. They more than anyone else—more than OPEC—influence the world price of oil. This is true even though most of the Middle East oil fields have been nationalized in the decades since World War II, as well as those in many other semicolonial countries. The imperialist-owned monopolies not only own and operate their own massive oil fields, but also dominate world petroleum refining capacity, transportation, and distribution networks. The government of the Soviet Union, the world’s largest oil producer, has also benefited from recent price increases, helping to offset falling revenues from the declining output of its crisis-racked petroleum industry.

The great losers economically—not to mention from the slaughter that is being planned—are working people in the United States and around the world. The majority of humanity—those in the semicolonial world—are being hit the hardest by the monopoly-rigged leap in oil prices. The Third World is being devastated. The working people of Eastern Europe are special victims too. They have been hit by the price hikes, the cutoff of Iraqi oil, the failure by the Soviet government to come through with contracted supplies, and—beginning January 1, 1991—with the necessity for the first time in decades of paying for Soviet oil in hard currency at the world market price.

So the war that is being prepared is an imperialist war in that sense too—a war for Big Oil.

There’s a third way in which it’s an imperialist war—the way Marxists have used the term for most of this century. It’s a war waged by finance capital. It’s a war over economic domination and control—redivision—of a big piece of the semicolonial world. It’s a war against other propertied classes in other countries for the domination of raw materials, markets, and access to the superexploitation of low-paid labor.

It even has the aspect of a war to redivide world power and influence among rival im-

perialist ruling classes. Despite the broad backing of the world’s capitalist ruling families for the war drive, the massive military operation in the Gulf is not a “coalition” effort. It’s not a partnership of equals. U.S. imperialism is calling the shots.

The bottom line, however, is that this will be a war in which all the imperialist powers—U.S. imperialism above all—stand to lose. It will be a war of a declining, not an advancing, imperialist power....

Antiwar sentiment will not stop war

Communists above all must have no illusion that antiwar sentiment can prevent an imperialist war. It never has. The rulers don’t care what working people think or feel, so long as they are convinced they can get away with what they need to do to defend their profits and class interests. Modern history has taught the rulers that actually starting a war always results in dampening antiwar sentiment for a while. But only for a while.

The army in Saudi Arabia will fight. Other workers and farmers will give grudging support initially, even many who currently oppose going to war. Especially given the living memory of Vietnam, this fatalism will often take the form of just wanting to get it over as quickly as possible—to minimize the deaths of buddies and family members, so that life can get back to normal. That’s especially the case among GIs, among workers and farmers in uniform, of course. Bush and the bipartisan gang from Congress who accompanied him to Saudi Arabia in November knew what they were doing when they embraced the slogan “No more Vietnams” as their own. They assured the soldiers that if “we” have to do it, we’ll throw in everything we have and get it over with fast.

Fatalism among layers of working people, in and out of uniform, in the initial stage of a war is normal—but it is quite different from wanting to go to war. And as wars drag on, they always become increasingly unpopular and give rise to mounting working-class resistance. World War I culminated in the formation of revolutionary councils of soldiers, workers, and peasants in Russia, Germany, and elsewhere in eastern and Central Europe. In Russia, the workers and peasants took power. Similar revolutionary developments began to take place in the closing stages of World War II, many of them crushed and demobilized by the joint efforts of the Stalinists, social democrats, and bourgeois forces throughout Europe. And we’ve explained the rise of workers’ struggles that took place here in the United States.

That process of polarization and differentiation will have to be gone through again if war is unleashed in the Middle East. We’re convinced that it will be fought through more quickly this time. Opposition during war can develop very rapidly. That’s what we are getting ready for. That’s what we have our eyes on in this working-class campaign against the war.

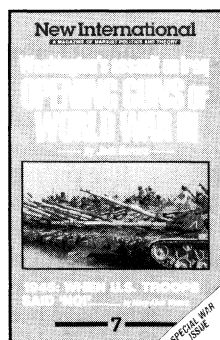
If we’re serious about the campaign, then we must pay close attention to the place where a large section of our class is organized.

Opening Guns of World War III

Washington’s Assault on Iraq

Jack Barnes
Washington’s murderous assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among the imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. In

New Internationalist no. 7. Regular price: \$12.00. \$10 with *Militant* subscription.



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Operation Mongoose: President Kennedy's plan to invade Cuba

In October 1962, in what is widely known as the Cuban Missile Crisis, Washington pushed the world to the brink of nuclear war. The events brought to a head the ongoing attempts by the U.S. rulers to overthrow the Cuban revolutionary government.

Released on the 40th anniversary of these events, the Pathfinder book *October 1962: The 'Missile' Crisis as Seen from Cuba*, by Cuban author Tomás Diez Acosta, tells the story of what really happened. The *Militant* is printing excerpts from the new title. The one below is taken from the third chapter of the book titled, "Operation Mongoose and U.S. Invasion Plans." Diez Acosta details how, in November 1961 the Kennedy administration put in place a series of covert operations aimed at invading the island. Copyright © 2002 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY TOMÁS DIEZ ACOSTA

As the Cuban people undertook huge efforts to develop their country despite the campaign of subversion, new plans for aggression were being drawn up in the United States. A debate was under way in Washington over the most effective method of directing, applying, and controlling the many resources devoted to overthrowing the Cuban revolutionary government.

Background to 1962 'missile' crisis in Cuba

After Cuban workers and farmers overthrew a U.S.-backed dictatorship and began a deep-going revolution in 1959, Washington took increasingly aggressive actions to try to overthrow the new revolutionary power. In April 1961, Cuba's revolutionary militias and armed forces crushed a U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs.

In the spring and summer of 1962, in face of escalating preparations by Washington for a full-scale invasion of Cuba, the revolutionary government signed a mutual defense pact with the Soviet Union. In October U.S. president John Kennedy demanded removal of Soviet nuclear missiles installed on the island. Washington imposed a naval blockade of Cuba, stepped up preparations for an armed assault, and placed its armed forces on nuclear alert.

In face of the mobilization of Cuban workers and farmers to defend their national sovereignty and revolutionary gains, the U.S. government backed off its invasion plans. Following an exchange of communications between Washington and Moscow, Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev, without consulting Cuba, announced his decision to remove the missiles on October 28.

In view of ongoing blunders in the anti-Cuba plans carried out by different departments and agencies, top echelons of the Kennedy administration began looking in late October 1961 for new methods to eliminate the prevailing "disorganization and lack of coordination." Just as in their earlier analysis of the Bay of Pigs operation, failures were ascribed to operational problems. Once again Washington underestimated the capacity of the Cuban people and their revolutionary leadership to successfully confront the challenges that such a hostile policy posed for their country.

U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy proposed to President John F. Kennedy the establishment of an operational command to direct the various plans of action in a unified, coordinated, and organized fashion and merge them into a "single plan." In practice, this meant the preparation of a new covert operation, not merely by the CIA but by the entire U.S. government. The president asked Assistant Special Counsel Richard N. Goodwin for his opinion. Goodwin, who also headed the Interagency Task Force, replied in a memorandum, "The beauty of such an operation over the next few months is that we cannot lose. If the best happens we will unseat Castro. If not, then at least we will emerge with a stronger underground, better propaganda and a far clearer idea of the dimensions of the problems which affect us."

Operation Mongoose takes shape

At a White House meeting on November 3, 1961, Kennedy authorized the development of a new program, much more sinister than its predecessors, designed to destroy the Cuban Revolution.¹ The project was code-named Operation Mongoose.

As a first step, several documents were prepared laying out the government's existing action plans and its options against Cuba. The CIA prepared a report on covert actions under way,² and the Interagency Task Force presented a "Plan for Cuba"—according to its authors, a study "to determine the courses of action which the U.S. would follow with reference to Cuba in the event of Fidel Castro's death in order to insure the replacement of the Castro regime with a friendly government."

Among the scenarios foreseen in this paper was that a general uprising would occur in Cuba as the result of a power struggle and massive reprisals against political opponents of the regime. In that situation, a devious plan would be implemented to prepare the ideological and political conditions for military intervention. The document stated: "Although the U.S. cannot defend this action as justified under international law, we can stress the morality of the action on the basis that a chaotic, near civil war situation exists off our shores where millions of Cubans are seeking freedom by throwing off the Communist yoke and have



Bohemia/above and right Washington's Operation Mongoose, and other such schemes aimed at overthrowing Cuba's revolutionary government, flowed from the U.S. rulers' hostility to the deepgoing and popular measures undertaken by workers and peasants following the overthrow of the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. Above: More than 100,000 young brigadistas participated in the yearlong National Literacy Campaign in 1961, teaching a million working people to read and write. Right: Cuban militia members with "Cuatro Bocas" (four mouths) anti-aircraft guns during October 1962 "missile" crisis.

requested our assistance."

As for the acceptability and feasibility of an invasion of Cuba, the document asserted, "American investments will suffer less in the long run than they would if Castro-Communism continued and spread throughout the hemisphere. The Alliance for Progress program will not encounter serious obstacles as a result of this action. If the operation is quickly and successfully accomplished, the political damage will be correspondingly reduced." Analyzing the repercussions that such action might have in Latin America, the document stated, "Widespread organized Communist disturbances will occur immediately but the more quickly the Castro regime is crushed the greater the difficulty the Communists will encounter in maintaining existing disturbances and in mounting further disturbances. A successful invasion may strengthen the will of Latin American Governments to destroy the Communist menace in their own countries." It concluded emphatically, "We can foresee no way other than invasion to accomplish the objective as stated in the problem."

On November 20, 1961, President Kennedy called the incoming CIA director, John A. McCone, to inform him that a new program of action against Cuba was being studied. In a memorandum summarizing Kennedy's call, McCone noted that the proposal "would embody a variety of covert operations, propaganda, all possible actions that would create dissensions within Cuba and would discredit the Castro regime, and political action with members of the OAS in support of the action." In addition, McCone recorded that the president told him that Brig. Gen. Edward Lansdale, an expert on guerrilla and antisubversive operations, would be in charge of designing the project, under the direct supervision of the attorney general. The president told McCone that he and his brother Robert wanted the plan to be ready in two weeks. To that end a committee was to be established, headed up by

Lansdale—who would also represent the Defense Department—along with high-level representatives of the State Department, CIA, and USIA. So obsessed were the Kennedys with the problem of Cuba that they proposed this committee be able to "cut across" the command structure of other agencies. McCone opposed this course, explaining the difficulties that it might pose once the operation was under way.

Ten days later, on November 30, 1961, President Kennedy officially communicated the key decisions made concerning the new operation in a presidential memorandum to the secretaries of state and defense, the director of the CIA, the attorney general, Richard Goodwin, and Generals Taylor and Lansdale.

The memorandum ordered the use of all "our available assets to... overthrow the communist regime" and designated General Lansdale as chief of operations, with the responsibility to lead the project through the appropriate government organizations and departments. It stipulated that "The NSC 5412 group³ will be kept closely informed of activities and be available for advice and recommendation." Kennedy also directed the secretaries of state and defense and the director of the Central Intelligence Agency to appoint "senior officers of their department as personal representatives to assist the Chief of Operations as required. These senior officers should be able to exercise—either themselves or through the Secretaries and Director—effective operational control over all aspects of their Department's operations dealing with Cuba." Finally, Kennedy specified, "Knowledge of the existence of this operation should be restricted to the recipients of this memorandum, members of the 5412 group and the representatives appointed by the Secretaries and the Director."

'Cuba Project' of Operation Mongoose
Continued on Page 8

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October 1962: The 'Missile' Crisis as Seen from Cuba

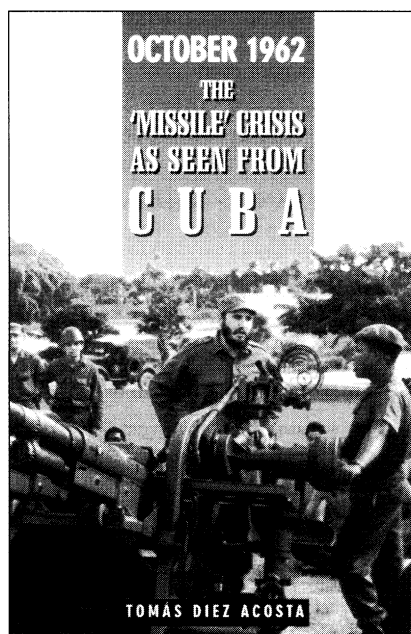
By Tomás Diez Acosta

"We possess moral long-range missiles that cannot be dismantled and will never be dismantled. This is our strongest strategic weapon."

Fidel Castro, November 1, 1962

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¹ In attendance at the meeting were Attorney General Robert Kennedy; George W. Ball, U. Alexis Johnson, Wymberley Coerr, and Robert Hurwitch for the State Department; Gen. Charles Cabell, Richard Bissell, Robert Amory, and Col. J.C. King for the CIA; and McGeorge Bundy and Goodwin of the White House staff. Also present were Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, Assistant Defense Secretary Paul Nitze, and Gen. Edward Lansdale.

² The CIA document had six points, including propaganda activities and psychological warfare (classified as nonsensitive); agent training; infiltration/exfiltration; creation of spy networks and counterrevolutionary organizations inside Cuba; encouragement of and material support to terrorist attacks and sabotage; and finally, air operations to support these subversive goals. "Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency: Types of Covert Action against the Castro Regime. Washington, November 8, 1961." *Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-63 (FRUS)*, vol. X, pp. 675-77.

³ A 1975 U.S. Senate report described the NSC 5412 as follows: "Beginning in 1955, the responsibility for authorizing CIA covert action operations lay with the Special Group, a subcommittee of the National Security Council composed of the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Today this group is known as the 40 Committee, and its membership has been expanded to include the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. During 1962 another NSC subcommittee was established to oversee covert operations in Cuba. This subcommittee was the Special Group (Augmented); its membership included the Special Group, the Attorney General, and certain other high officials." *Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders: An Interim Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities* (also known as the Church Committee report). Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1975.

War drive spurs Pathfinder sales at Paris fair

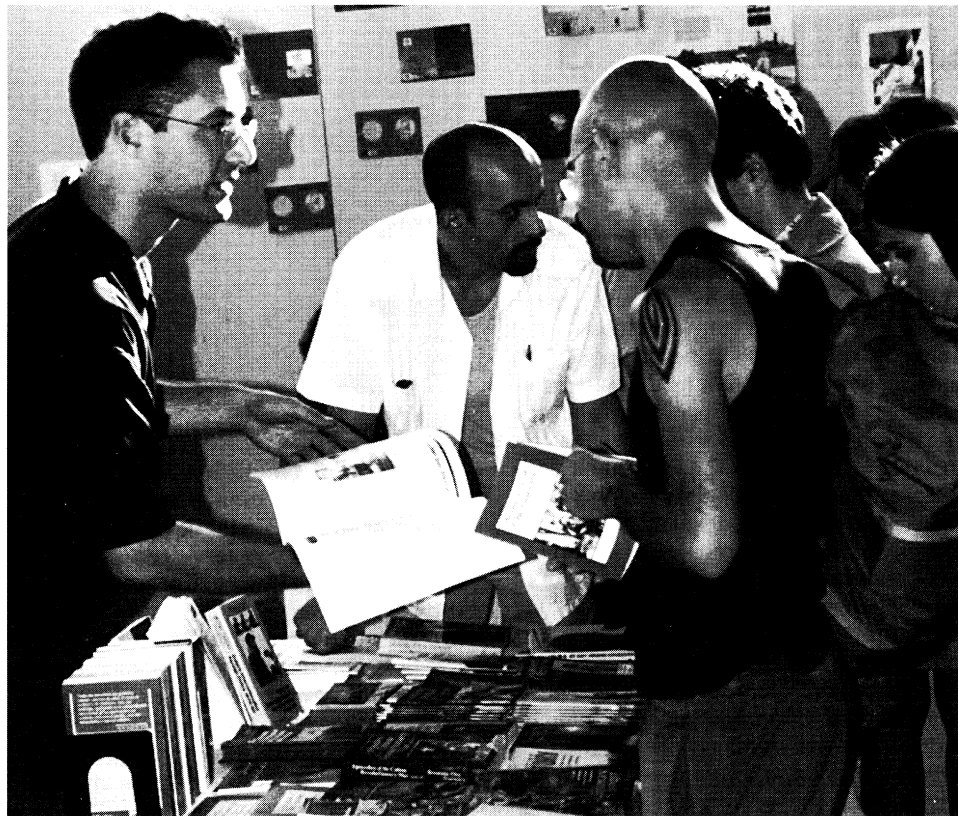
BY NAT LONDON

PARIS—Discussions and debate on Washington's drive to war against Iraq—along with the French government's preparations to send its forces into the fray—swirled around the Pathfinder book stall throughout the three days of the annual *Fête de l'Humanité*, a giant street fair near here. The give and take on this and other questions was accompanied by an unprecedented level of interest in the revolutionary books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder. All told, participants in the fair bought some 131 titles.

Hundreds of thousands of people, somewhat more than in recent years, took part in the September 13–15 festival, which is organized each year by *l'Humanité*, the newspaper of the French Communist Party (PCF).

The Pathfinder team included members of the Communist Leagues in Canada and the United Kingdom, the Young Socialists in the United States, and nine supporters of the communist movement in France and Belgium. In the numerous discussions on the coming imperialist assault on Iraq, these volunteers explained that while the French rulers frequently differ with Washington, and chafe under the humiliations of their status as a secondary imperialist power, they are preparing to join their forces to those of their U.S. rivals. And they are stepping up their nationalist rhetoric as they do so.

The Pathfinder volunteers also met a lot of interest as they described the resistance by working people in the imperialist countries to the capitalist offensive, and the keen response that socialist workers and youth encounter in their soapboxing election cam-



Pathfinder stall at Fête de l'Humanité attracted keen interest among participants

paigns in the United States. They also fielded questions ranging from Pathfinder's origins and history to the politics of Che Guevara, Thomas Sankara and Malcolm X—revolutionary leaders whose speeches and writings are printed by the working-class publisher.

As these discussions proceeded, sales of

the Marxist magazine *Nouvelle Internationale* (New International) no. 5 featuring the article "The Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq" and *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes—both of which shed light on these

questions—continued to rise.

Participants at the fair bought nine copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and 13 of various issues of *New International* in both French and English. They also purchased about 30 English-language books—more than ever before—along with 24 copies of the *Militant*, 14 more than a year ago. Thirteen people bought the newly published French-language edition of James P. Cannon's *The History of American Trotskyism, 1928–38: Report of a Participant*, making it the team's top seller. Since this edition was first published four months ago, 124 copies have been sold in France.

The total sales value amounted to \$1,400, an increase of 45 percent over last year.

Basque fighter: 'breath of fresh air'

One of those who stopped by the stand was Basque independence fighter Gabriel Mouesca. He wanted to thank Pathfinder, he said, for "the breath of fresh air" it had given him during his 17 years in a French prison for his political activities. He was released last year.

When Mouesca was first arrested, he and his supporters purchased a number of titles from the revolutionary publishing house, particularly books by Che Guevara. These now form the core of the political library that he and his still-imprisoned comrades put together at the Fresnes prison, just outside of Paris.

"The writings of Che Guevara," Mouesca told *Militant* reporters, "were our intellectual sustenance which allowed us to continue all those years in prison." At the Fête de l'Humanité stall Mouesca bought the *New International* with the article "Opening Guns of World War III," a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, and *Puerto Rico: Independence is a Necessity* by Rafael Cancel Miranda.

Kennedy's plan for invading Cuba

Continued from Page 7

General Lansdale drafted a memorandum to the members of the 5412 group, dated December 7, 1961, which listed the concepts and general lines of action to be carried out in Operation Mongoose. This document can be considered the first draft of the Cuba Project aimed at overthrowing the revolution.

Utilizing his authority to employ all available means in the project, Lansdale openly spelled out the tasks of different agencies involved—tasks that had already been undertaken covertly but had not been put in writing in documents such as this. These included a proposal that the CIA undertake "bold new actions" and that it utilize the "potential of the underworld" and, in close cooperation with the FBI, "enlist the assistance of American links" to the Mafia in Cuba.

This draft of Operation Mongoose was discussed and approved by Group 5412 without changing or amending any of the projected tasks. Based on those projections, Lansdale and his operational group conducted studies and coordinated with the departments and agencies involved to finalize their project of secret war against Cuba.

On January 18, 1962, Lansdale submitted the Cuba Project to top government authorities and the Special Group (Augmented). It envisioned thirty-two tasks to be carried out by departments and agencies participating in Operation Mongoose. "The U.S. objective," the paper stated, "is to help the Cubans overthrow the Communist regime from within Cuba and institute a new government with which the United States can live in peace."

The program included a variety of political, diplomatic, economic, psychological, propaganda, and espionage actions, different acts of terrorism and sabotage, as well as encouragement and logistical support to armed counterrevolutionary bands. In short, the operation was aimed at provoking a "revolt" of the Cuban people, which once begun would lay the basis for direct military intervention by the armed forces of the United States and its Latin American allies.

The document asserted:

"The revolt requires a strongly motivated political action movement established within Cuba, to generate the revolt, to give it direction towards the object, and to capitalize on the climactic moment. The political actions will be assisted by economic warfare to induce failure of the Communist regime to supply Cuba's economic needs, psychological operations to turn the peoples' resentment increasingly against the regime, and military-type groups to give the popular movement an action arm for sabo-

tage and armed resistance in support of political objectives."

General Lansdale's mentality in drawing up the project was shown in a memorandum to members of the Operation Mongoose working group, in which he emphasized: "It is our job to put the American genius to work on this project, quickly and effectively." The kind of genius the chief of operations had in mind was shown when he later added task thirty-three, consisting of "a plan to disable Cuban sugar workers during the harvest by means of chemical weapons."

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⁴ Declassified documents suggest that this task was conceived by Lansdale at the end of his January 19 meeting with Attorney General Robert Kennedy. Lansdale critically noted there that the "United States Government was precluded from destroying the current sugar crop." See "Memorandum From the Chief of Operations in the Deputy Directorate for Plans (Helms) to Director of Central Intelligence McCone, Washington, January 19, 1962," *FRUS*, vol. X, p. 720.

Sure, a procession was spotted—“An American air strike that killed dozens of Afghan civilians at a wedding party was justified because the



Harry Ring

plane had come under fire from the ground, a U.S. military investigation concluded.”—News item.

Profiled—An Israeli “investigation” cleared members of its army

who killed 12 Palestinian civilians. Four West Bank quarry workers and four Gaza Strip farmers died for “moving in a suspicious manner,” reported the *Los Angeles Times*. In the third incident, two children and two teenagers died in a missile attack reportedly aimed at “suspected militants.” This, a report said, was the result of “a technical problem.”

T-shirt get a boost—T-shirts are showing up in Cartersville, Georgia, bearing an image of the Clydesdale horses above the words, “There is power in numbers.” Anheuser-Busch (“Bud” beer) is suing its brewery workers in Teamsters Local 1129, demanding that they recall the shirts already in use,

stop further distribution, and pay damages. The union represents about 95 percent of the plants’ 410 hourly workers. The shirts were ordered from a catalog and sold so briskly that several hundred more were ordered.

Justice and super-justice?—A reader heard it on NPR’s Market Place: “There are two kinds of justice; justice for the rich and justice for the superrich.”

Can you be evicted?—Vacancies are still available for condos on the *World*, a 12-deck ocean liner. Apartment prices range from \$2 million to \$7 million. Plus heavy duty monthly carrying charges. But that

includes real grass on the putting green.

Oyez, oyez—The Lord Chief Justice of the United Kingdom’s criminal courts wants to get rid of archaic Latin legalisms. The Lord’s offices confides that he’s having a tough time coming up with a synonym for *pro bono*. Lawyers have suggested “free of charge” or merely “free.” Maybe it’s too touchy.

Don’t worry about it—The spate of brainy articles brought on by the Los Angeles hunt for a new police chief is under way. We admit skipping them. But one headline caught our eye. Penned by Jay Wachtel, a criminal justice prof and

ex-cop: “The next chief of police should be, first and foremost, a cop.”

He’s available?—Prof. Wachtel’s think piece concludes with a biographical note that he’s “spent 25 years in law enforcement.”

Those crazy ultralefts—Ian Duncan Smith, a leader of England’s Tory Party, is bracing for an outraged response for his daring proposals to modernize the aging party of the right. He’s audaciously proposing the ball opening the party conference no longer be a black tie event. And, if he rallies sufficient support, the bash will end without the singing of *Land of Hope and Glory*.

Cleveland protest demands justice in killing by cop

BY EVA BRAIMAN

CLEVELAND—Dozens of friends, family members, and neighbors gathered August 28 on Cleveland’s West Side for a vigil to protest the police killing of 16-year-old Ricardo Mason and the shooting of his friend, Malcolm “LeeLee” Hoyle, also 16. Mason’s death was the sixth fatal shooting by Cleveland cops this year.

The two cops, who had been chasing the car Hoyle was driving early on August 27, shot him in the face and Mason in the back. Charging that the car had been stolen, they justified their lethal assault by claiming Hoyle had backed the automobile into one of them, and that they had shot him in self-defense.

The two officers have been placed on paid administrative leave.

On August 31 Hoyle, who remains in critical condition after many hours of surgery on his face, was charged with involuntary manslaughter for the death of Mason. Prosecutors, who may ask for Hoyle to be charged as an adult, say Hoyle’s actions caused his friend’s death. Another youth who was in the car, Adam Michael, was arrested and placed in juvenile detention.

A number of eyewitnesses who attended the vigil refuted a statement issued by Bob Beck, president of the Cleveland Police Patrolmen’s Association, who said the cops “were forced to shoot” the ninth-grade boys. “Where were they going to go?” asked one resident eyewitness. “The cops had the alley sealed off with cars. We want the facts, we want the truth. There is a cover-up in the making here.”

Neighbors recounting the incident say that after shooting and beating the boys the police threatened and yelled racist epithets at witnesses.

“They think we’re scared to testify. Everyone here knows how the police—Black and white—come through this neighborhood. They know all of us by name, including the ones they shot,” said Demetrius, 22. “Now they get a paid vacation for killing a kid,” commented another community resident.

“We need justice. They didn’t need to shoot those babies,” said Charlene Hatfield, a health-care worker who lives in the neighborhood and knew one of the boys. Jocelyn Walker, 20, described her own experiences of being “harassed and disrespected, including by female cops.” Walker noted that after the shooting, police promptly took officer Robert Taylor, who allegedly suffered a bruised knee, to a nearby private hospital, while the boys, who were shot and bleeding, were later taken to public MetroHealth Medical Center, farther away. She also described how in order for Hoyle’s parents to visit their son, who remained in critical condition for some days handcuffed to his hospital bed, they must obtain a pass from the downtown police headquarters every 15 minutes. “They have to go back and forth from the hospital to the justice center just to see him.”

‘No justice, no peace’

As the vigil turned into a spontaneous, peaceful march around the block, police cruisers began to amass on the street. From behind the fence of a nearby playground, residents continued to chant, “No justice, no peace!” and pointed accusing fingers at the police. A television news program that evening labeled the scene a “near riot.” As she walked away from the playground, Jocelyn Walker said, “They do not want people like us to know the law. We have the right to protest. We will not let this rest.”

Hoyle’s mother, Glenda Russell, said in response to the charges against her son, “How could he be the cause of [Ricardo’s] death? They shot him.”

In response to the killing and the protests, Cleveland safety director James Draper announced that he will oversee the investigation of the recent shootings, but he made clear that “this doesn’t necessarily mean the police did anything wrong.” The president of the Cleveland NAACP has called for more training of the cops.

A September 3 funeral held for Mason was attended by more than 200 people, includ-



Militant

September 4 march demands justice for 16-year-old Ricardo Mason, killed by Cleveland cops several days earlier. His friend, Malcolm Hoyle, was shot in the face.

ing Hoyle’s mother, who addressed the service. Many of the young people wore homemade T-shirts that read: “73rd & Lawn,” where the shootings took place, and “Let’s not forget LeeLee. R.I.P. Ricardo.” Neighbors reported that the cops have been harassing youth wearing these shirts.

On September 4 about 20 people protested outside City Hall to oppose police brutality and demand justice for the youths. Activists addressed the rally and those passing by from a bullhorn on the City Hall steps. James Sanders, whose son Jermaine, 25, was killed by Cleveland police last January, attended the protest and said there needed to be such demonstrations to “stop letting cops get off with just paid leave.

They should be tried and sent to jail.”

Eva Braiman is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 911, and is the Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Ohio.

Book meetings boost Pathfinder Fund

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Supporters of the Pathfinder Fund report making progress in collecting pledges and winning new contributors. Around one-third of the way through the September 1—November 17 drive, fund participants in a number of cities have organized or are putting together public political events to boost their local tallies and assist the overall collection.

Pathfinder editorial director Steve Clark spoke on the lessons of Pathfinder’s newest book, *October 1962: The “Missile” Crisis as Seen from Cuba* by Tomás Díez Acosta, at meetings in Newark, New Jersey, and Brooklyn on September 20 and 21.

Naomi Craine reports from Newark that the event there brought in more than \$1,200, including a contribution by a meatpacking worker who is a new reader of Pathfinder books.

At the Brooklyn meeting another new contributor was won in the course of Clark’s talk and the animated discussion that followed, and \$535 was collected, as well as \$135 in new or increased pledges.

The nearly \$13,000 collected to date is already being put to work, as Pathfinder’s editors, international “reprint army” of volunteers, and printshop editors organize to

carry out an ambitious publishing program for the rest of 2002.

Hundreds of copies of *October 1962: The “Missile” Crisis as Seen from Cuba* have been shipped from the new Pathfinder distribution center in Atlanta. Supporters of Pathfinder will aggressively promote the new title at book fairs in New York, Baltimore, Detroit, and Houston, all happening on the weekend of September 28–29.

Emily Fitzsimmons, who is organizing the Pathfinder stall at “New York Is Book Country” September 29, reports that 150 copies of the Díez book will be prominently featured at that event. Volunteer sales representatives will meet book buyers there in an effort to get orders or appointments.

As the 40th anniversary of the October crisis approaches, Pathfinder promoters will take advantage of the special opportunities for discussion on that historic episode, in which the workers and farmers of Cuba stood up with courage and dignity as Washington prepared to invade the island and took the world to the brink of nuclear war.

The conferences, newspaper and magazine articles, and television and radio presentations on the subject will create special openings to publicize and sell the title, which

makes available for the first time the Cuban side of the story.

One such event is the October 1 conference titled “On the 40th Anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis” to be held at the City University of New York. Panelists will include Arthur Schlesinger, a special assistant to U.S. president Kennedy during the 1962 events, and Carlos Alzugaray, the deputy director of Cuba’s Institute for Higher International Studies.

In the coming week, fund organizers will step up their efforts not only in winning new contributors but in collecting the money already pledged. At present, the collection stands about \$15,000 behind the \$28,350 mark—or 27 percent of the total—that we should have reached by now. If fund participants in every city build on the momentum that is growing, we can get the fund on track for completion in full and on time. Contributions to the fund can be sent to the *Militant*, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014, with checks made out to Pathfinder.

\$105,000 Pathfinder Fund Sept. 1—Nov. 17. Week 3

	Goal	Paid	%
Tucson	150	100	67%
Charlotte	3,500	1,750	50%
Newark	3,600	1,533	43%
Western Colorado	2,600	925	36%
NY Garment District	5,000	1,585	32%
Philadelphia	5,000	1,427	29%
Brooklyn	3,200	860	27%
Northeast PA	1,200	235	20%
San Francisco	8,500	1,360	16%
Pittsburgh	4,200	650	15%
Des Moines	1,200	150	13%
Omaha	900	75	8%
Twin Cities	5,000	400	8%
Atlanta	4,250	310	7%
Boston	3,500	200	6%
Miami	2,100	120	6%
Washington DC	3,000	150	5%
Birmingham	3,100	100	3%
Upper Manhattan	3,600	110	3%
Houston	4,500	115	3%
Tampa	2,000	20	1%
Detroit	3,000	20	1%
Chicago	5,500	25	0%
Los Angeles	9,500	10	0%
Cleveland	1,700	0	0%
Seattle	7,500	0	0%
Other		634	
U.S. total	97,300	12,864	13%
Sweden	1,400	100	7%
France	350	20	6%
New Zealand	1,200	40	3%
Australia	1,300	0	0%
Canada	4,500	0	0%
Iceland	150	0	0%
United Kingdom	1,200	0	0%
International total	107,400	13,024	12%
International goal	105,000	28,350	27%

Imperialist plunder of Africa deepens impact of drought

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Over the past two years the worst drought in a decade has carved deep inroads into the already meager living standards of workers and peasants in southern Africa.

While drought conditions are international, reaching well beyond the continent into parts of Asia, Canada, the United States, and elsewhere, the severe dry spell's impact on Africa is especially acute, given the brutal legacy and present-day reality of colonial and imperialist exploitation.

In sub-Saharan Africa, considered the poorest region on earth, the drought has caused many crops to fail, while livestock have starved to death because of a lack of water and pasture. The resulting food shortage is the worst in nearly 60 years.

"In the last five seasons we did not sell anything because we did not have rain," Stephen Waithaka, a Kenyan corn farmer, told reporters in early September. "We still had enough for ourselves," he added. "I fear others did not."

Officials from the UN World Food Program say that hundreds of thousands of metric tons of cornmeal and foodstuffs are needed to feed the region. More than 14 million people are facing famine in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, say UN researchers.

In Malawi the number of cases of severe malnutrition identified in local clinics has soared by 80 percent in the course of the drought.

In February officials from the European Union reported that many Africans had gone without food for a week or more. Some authorities in the region put the figure of those suffering from hunger and malnutrition at 20 million.

Working people have told reporters of the impact on their living standards from price-

gouging by food merchants. In Zambia, for example, the price of corn has been driven up by 300 percent. Tipilire Kasingiro of Zambia said she cannot afford what food is available. To ease hunger pangs she and her neighbors have dug up the roots of a banana tree and pounded them into a porridge for a meal, aware that it would make them ill. "We were desperate, and we knew it would fill our bellies, if only temporarily," she explained.

"I have never seen such starvation," said Lucas Lufuzi, an old farmer in Malawi. "I had no choice but to harvest the crops before they were ready." That harvest, he added, "is all that keeps us from death."

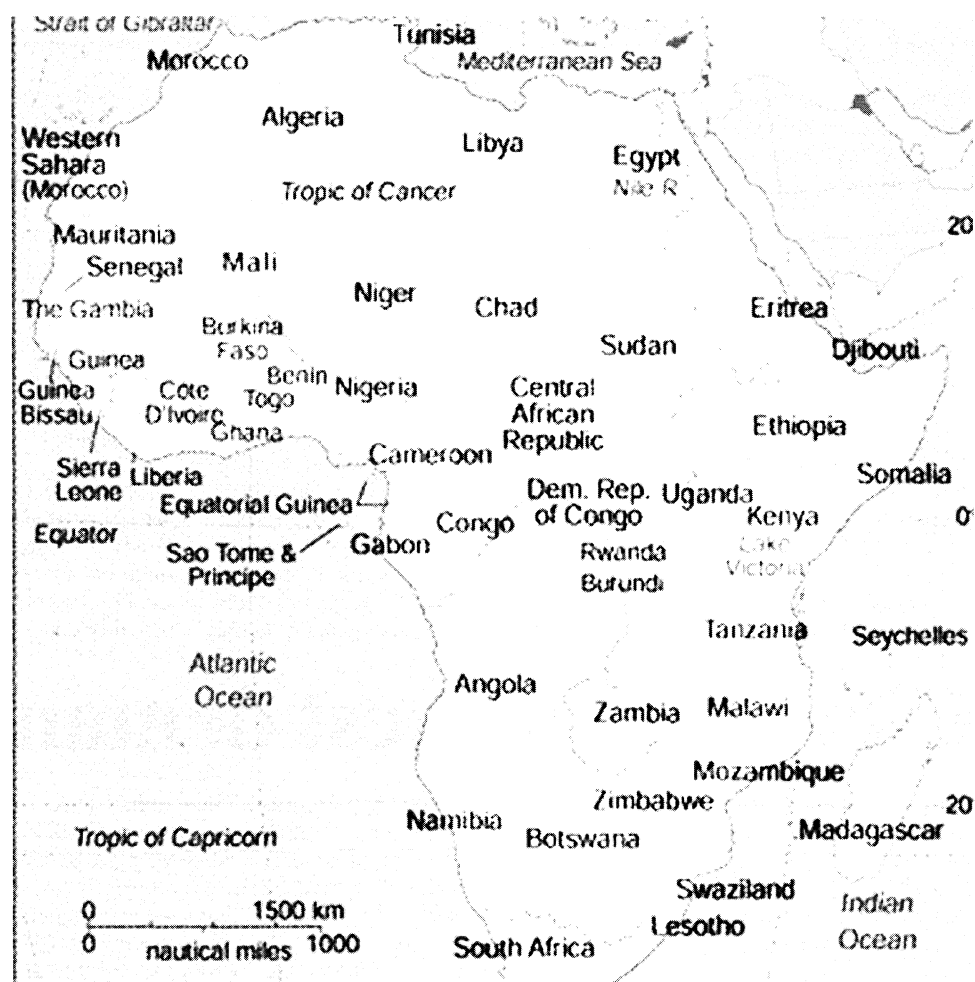
The famine conditions confronting toilers in Africa flow from the imperialist-imposed backwardness in agriculture and industry. Most farmers in Africa lack access to technology and modern irrigation methods needed to battle against drought, crop disease, weeds, and pests.

Unequal use of electricity

With nearly 10 percent of the world's population, the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa consume only 1 percent of the world's electricity. Since 1995 commercial energy use and electric power consumption have actually dropped across the region. The imperialist countries in North America, Europe, and Japan, home to a mere 14 percent of the world's population, use almost 60 percent of the world's electricity.

The total debt of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa owed to imperialist banks, lending agencies, and governments amounts to \$170 billion, more than half their yearly gross domestic product.

The continent has an abundance of minerals such as copper, diamonds, silver, gold, and petroleum. It is one of the world's largest sources of cobalt, uranium, iron, and



bauxite.

Africa's wealth in natural resources, including a vast amount of land suitable for agriculture, stands in stark contrast to the immense poverty of its people. Nearly half the population lives on less than \$1 a day. Of the 49 least developed countries in the world, 37, or 75 percent of the total, are in Africa. Below the Sahara, average income is lower today than in 1970.

The Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute last year predicted that if the situation remains the same or gets worse, the number of malnourished children in Africa could rise to nearly 49 million—one in every two. By contrast, the agency reported a drop in the global malnutrition rate among children under 5 from 45 percent in the 1960s to 31 percent in 2001.

Under such conditions life expectancy for Africans is falling. In Zambia it has dropped from 50 in the late 1980s to 37 today. Without adequate nutrition thousands die from malaria and cholera and other diseases that they might have otherwise survived.

Added to the impact of chronic hunger, the AIDS pandemic is decimating the population. Last year some 2.2 million Africans died of the disease. Of the estimated 40 million people worldwide who are infected with the HIV virus that causes AIDS, more than 70 percent, or 28.5 million, live in Africa.

A UN-sponsored food conference held in Spain this summer noted that AIDS has exacerbated Africa's food crisis by killing farmers in some of the world's most famished areas. Over the past 20 years some 7 million farmers in Africa have died of AIDS, reducing labor productivity by up to 50 percent.

Washington's protectionist weapons

Africa's impoverished conditions are reinforced and perpetuated by the trade policies of Washington and the European impe-

rialist powers, which slap protectionist measures on key imports, blocking African commodities from the market. This is one factor in the drastic decline in Sub-Saharan Africa's share of world trade, which has dropped to 1.3 percent, about a third of what it was 20 years ago. According to the World Bank, since 1970 African countries have lost half their share of world markets.

While Washington has eliminated some tariffs on African exports, presenting such steps as a boost to the continent's economic development, many restrictions remain in place. These include the requirement that a range of commodities produced in Africa, including textiles, must contain raw material imported from the United States to qualify for entry into the U.S. market.

The governments in imperialist countries allocate \$350 billion annually for domestic agricultural subsidies, which disproportionately go to capitalist farmers. These policies are estimated to cost semicolonial countries at least \$50 billion a year in lost agricultural exports.

Added to the higher yields and lower costs of production of U.S. agriculture, such protectionist moves have a devastating impact on African competitiveness.

Ghana is one example. Through the International Monetary Fund Washington insisted that the Ghanaian government eliminate subsidies on its rice crop, at the same time as it increased subsidies for U.S. farmers. Vendors in that country, once a rice exporter, now mainly sell rice imported from the United States. Unable to compete with cheaper U.S. imports, rice-growing areas have been devastated.

The recent U.S. farm bill spells "more doom for us," said Bishop Akogolo, executive director of a social agency in Accra, Ghana's capital. "You keep your subsidies and we'll keep our subsidies and barriers," he told a *New York Times* reporter.

Dockworkers confront threats

Continued from front page

breaking the union," making the company a target of the union action.

In an effort to undermine workers' participation in the actions, the company brought forward the lunch hour by one hour to 11:00 a.m. Angered by this move, longshore workers at an Oakland terminal operated by Maersk Sealand refused to return to work after lunch, holding up the unloading of one ship.

The next morning 300 dockworkers joined a spirited picket line outside the Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, where Elaine Chao, the U.S. labor secretary, was making an appearance. Earlier in the week Chao had been targeted by a similar

protest in San Francisco.

Chanting "No contract, no work," the dockworkers drew support from passing truck drivers, who helped out with their booming horns. Groups of supporters from unions of office workers, janitors, and electrical workers brought their solidarity. Biltmore Hotel workers, represented by the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union, said that their members have been sporting "We Support ILWU, No Government Intervention" stickers inside the hotel.

A number of dockworkers wore safety buttons on their shirts, a sign of their concern about the sharp increase in workplace accidents. Three ILWU members have been killed on the job this summer, the most recent being on September 3 at SSA's Pacific Container Terminal in Long Beach.

A proposal by terminal operators to increase the posted speed limits from 10 to 15 miles an hour to 25 illustrates the PMA drive to speed up work on the docks. The union has declared its opposition to the proposal.

Accusing the union of organizing slowdowns, or conducting a "selective strike," against SSA, PMA officials declared September 19 that they would launch a lockout the next day beginning with the morning shift.

Union representatives had announced on September 2 that they were pulling out of contract talks and nullifying the official day-by-day extension of the contract that had applied until then. This empowered the union to call slowdowns and other job actions.

The union is "playing with fire and appears to be willing to jeopardize America's economic interests by initiating hit-and-run tactics against members of the PMA," said PMA president Joseph Minace.

Union representatives denied that any slowdowns had been instituted. Work had been disrupted, they said, because companies had ordered more jobs than the union could fill. A lockout was finally averted on September 20 when the union was able to fill all the slots.

The West Coast ports handle more than 40 percent of the seaborne cargo arriving in the United States, with an annual value of more than \$300 billion.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Independence for Puerto Rico; U.S. Navy Out of Vieques. Fri., Oct. 4, 7:30 p.m. 168 Bloomfield Ave., 2nd Floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (973) 481-0077.

NEW YORK

Upper Manhattan

Oppose U.S. Intervention in Colombia. Working Class Resistance in South America Speaker: Róger Calero, *Militant* staff writer, Fri., Oct. 4, 7:30 p.m. 599 W. 187th Street, 2nd Floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

OHIO

Cleveland

Oppose Imperialism's march towards war: campaigning with revolutionary books from the U.S. to Puerto Rico. Speaker: Chessie Molano, Young Socialist Leadership Council, recently returned from *Militant* reporting team in Puerto Rico. Sat., Oct. 5, 6:30 p.m. dinner, 7:30 p.m. program 11018 Lorain Ave. Tel: (216) 688-1190. C

From Pathfinder

by V.I. Lenin

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Guilt by association

The drive by the U.S. government to launch an invasion of Iraq as part of a course to reinforce its dominance on the oil-rich lands of the Arab-Persian Gulf is paralleled by its assault on workers' rights at home. The arrests of six U.S. citizens resident in Buffalo, New York, accused of being part of an "al Qaeda sleeper cell," is a graphic example.

The case is one of guilt by association. The men are targeted not for any illegal action but for where they have traveled, for their religious beliefs, and for the company they keep. The open-ended accusations give prosecutors a freer hand to use circumstantial evidence and innuendo.

Such attacks on U.S. citizens build on the sweeps unleashed by cops against immigrants from the Mideast and South Asia after Sept. 11, 2001. Hundreds have been rounded up in a so-called terrorism investigation, although the deportations and jailings have centered on violations of immigration law.

Federal jailers continue to hold at least two other citizens, Yasser Esam Hamdi and Abdullah al-Muhajir, using the argument that they are "enemy combatants." On this basis the government claims it is under no obligation—and no deadline—to bring them to trial.

Drought: not a 'natural' disaster

The fact that a drought is devastating southern Africa and that millions of workers and peasants face starvation is not due to a "natural disaster." It is a man-made social disaster, caused by the normal way in which the capitalist profit system works.

Adequate irrigation, improved agricultural productivity, measures to halt the advance of the desert, food and water storage facilities, access to land and aid for small farmers—all these would provide protection from natural calamities.

But countries in Africa, like those throughout the semicolonial world, face two related problems. Their economies have been warped and underdeveloped by centuries of colonial and imperialist plunder, leading to much lower levels of agricultural productivity than in the most industrialized nations. And a small handful of billionaire families—in the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Japan, and elsewhere—are the ones that monopolize markets, set prices, and control distribution, at the expense of the semicolonial world.

Is famine caused by population growth outstripping food supply? No. Despite periodic droughts, floods, and other problems, food production worldwide has climbed at a rate 25 percent above that of population since 1960. But food is a commodity, and decisions on its production and distribution are designed to enrich the owners of imperialist corporations, not to meet the needs of millions. Likewise, the health crises and lack of drinkable water, sewage systems, and access to electricity facing workers and peasants in Africa are perpetuated by imperialist oppression.

The vast bulk of the wealth produced by workers and farmers in Africa—including the extraction of mineral riches and the bounties of land and sea—is simply transferred to the bank accounts of the imperialist rulers. A major vehicle for sucking the wealth out of the oppressed nations is debt bondage—the payment of billions of dollars in interest on increasingly unpayable loans foisted on their pliant governments by the banks of Wall Street and elsewhere.

Washington's predatory, protectionist trade policies add to the impact of the greater productivity of labor and agriculture in the United States, which enables agribusiness

These actions trample on basic constitutional safeguards such as protection against unlawful search and seizure and the right to due process. Such guarantees are the by-product of struggles by workers and farmers for social progress in the face of the employers, their cops, and their courts.

Workers' rights go much broader, and deeper, than what has been codified in bourgeois law. They include the ability of workers to organize unions, to strike, and to take political action, as well as to be shielded from the arbitrary brutality and injustice of the exploiters and their agents. It is those rights that are in the sights of the U.S. rulers today as they move in anticipation of the social struggles and class combat the crisis of their system will engender.

It is important for class-conscious workers to explain what is behind these attacks and to demand the release of the six men in Buffalo, as well as the hundreds of other detainees rounded up by the FBI and immigration cops; to protest the incarceration under subhuman conditions of hundreds at the U.S. prison camp at the Guantánamo naval base on Cuban territory; and to oppose Washington's imperialist drive to war abroad. Taking such a stance strengthens our ability to fight the increasing assault by the bosses and their government on workers and farmers.

and other corporations to undersell producers in the so-called Third World.

On top of all this, "foreign aid"—always with strings attached—is designed to promote not development but dependence on imports and more indebtedness.

Finance capital enforces its system of pillage and plunder with military force. Today, Washington is moving toward war in the Middle East to establish its supremacy over the region's vast oil and gas reserves. And the U.S. and French rulers have sent hundreds of troops to Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) under the pretext of protecting lives.

This is what imperialism increasingly has to offer toiling humanity: war, economic catastrophe, and famine.

The means to end these relations of exploitation and brutality lie in the hands of the workers and peasants of Africa, acting in concert with fellow toilers around the world. Their capacity to do so is seen in the continent's rich history of anti-imperialist and popular struggles, from the post-World War II anticolonial revolutions to the overthrow of apartheid rule.

Thomas Sankara, the principal leader of the popular revolutionary government in the West African country of Burkina Faso in 1983–87, addressed the drought caused by the advancing Saharan desert. The battle against the encroachment of the desert is "above all a struggle against imperialism," he explained.

To address these life-and-death questions, the peasants and workers of Burkina had to make a popular revolution, take political power, and wage a fight to free themselves from imperialist domination. The revolutionary government led by Sankara mobilized the population to expand literacy; nationalize the land; plant trees; improve agricultural techniques; build housing, roads, dams, and reservoirs; and advance the involvement of women in political life.

Working people around the world can join with the struggles of workers and farmers in Africa. Our most important contribution is to demand that Washington and other governments cancel Africa's foreign debt and remove all their tariffs or other protectionist weapons against Third World countries; and to oppose all imperialist military intervention.

Grito de Lares

Continued from front page

urday, and a smaller group has maintained a permanent protest camp there for weeks. Members of the Federation of Pro-Independence Youth, the Union of Socialist Youth, Hostos National Congress, New Independence Movement, and other pro-independence organizations joined in the action.

Among those attending the meeting on behalf of the political prisoners was Luis Rosa, one of the independence fighters freed in 1999. "The victory three years ago was the result of a struggle," he said in an interview. "But we still have three comrades who have spent close to 23 years in prison and who will remain there if we don't keep up the fight. It's important to get back to work mobilizing people as broadly as possible."

Rosa himself, sentenced to 105 years in prison, spent two decades behind bars. He has since continued his political activity outside prison walls.

The success of previous defense campaigns shows it's possible to force Washington to free the remaining prisoners, Rosa said. He cited the broad campaign that in 1978–79 won the release of five Nationalists who had been jailed for a quarter of a century, including Lolita Lebrón and Rafael Cancel Miranda. Despite the fact that several years ago Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge signed an execution order against Mumia Abu-Jamal, framed up on murder charges, "it's a movement demanding the release of Mumia Abu-Jamal that has saved his life. We haven't gotten full justice for him but we've stopped the lynchmen from doing their work," Rosa said.

"We have to fight to free all the political prisoners—not just the Puerto Rican independence fighters, but [Native American activist] Leonard Peltier, Mumia, the five Cubans, and others," he added.

Puerto Rican independence fighters have long experience with Washington's use of "terrorism" charges to arrest opponents of its policies, Rosa pointed out.

"Today the U.S. government is raising the banner of war," he said. "Now we must protest the arrests and the profiling of Islamic people" and others arrested as part of Washington's war drive and its assault on basic rights inside the United States.

Martin Koppel and Paul Pederson are the Socialist Workers candidates for governor of New York and for U.S. Congress in the 12th District, respectively. They traveled to Puerto Rico together with Chessie Molano, SWP candidate for lieutenant governor of Illinois.

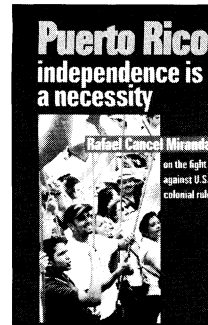
From Pathfinder

Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity

Rafael Cancel Miranda

In two interviews, Cancel Miranda — one of five Puerto Rican Nationalists imprisoned by Washington for more than 25 years until 1979 — speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the campaign needed to free the Puerto Rican political prisoners, the example of Cuba's socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today. In English and Spanish. Booklet \$3

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8



Palestinians protest after Israeli copter raid

Continued from front page

Israeli Defense Forces officers' thinking, "so that no one will think of messing with us."

U.S. president Bush criticized the Israeli siege in Ramallah, describing the Israeli actions as "not helpful."

Bush's September 24 comment followed Washington's abstention on a UN Security Council resolution that called for Tel Aviv to pull back from the blockade of the Palestinian Authority compound. Sponsored by European Union officials, the resolution also condemned Palestinian "terrorism."

Four days earlier, reported *Ha'aretz*, U.S. defense sec-

retary Donald Rumsfeld told the Congressional Armed Services Committee that Israel "must refrain from responding if it is attacked by Iraq." Rumsfeld made the comment during testimony urging broad support for a U.S. war on Baghdad.

The daily noted, "this is the first public comment by a senior U.S. official regarding a possible U.S. response to an Iraqi attack on Israel.... Sources in Washington predicted...that the U.S. will do all in its power to prevent Israel from taking action, by launching intense attacks against Iraq missile launchers and through military assistance."

Rumsfeld calls for 'restraint'

Rumsfeld urged Tel Aviv to act with the "restraint" he said it had exhibited during the 1990–91 Gulf War, when Iraqi Scud missiles landed on Israeli soil. In fact, during that conflict U.S. commanders declined to give their Israeli counterparts the friend-or-foe codes necessary for their planes to carry out retaliatory raids.

Martin Indyk, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel, said that this time the Israeli pilots have already been given the relevant codes by U.S. officers, according to the September 24 *U.S. Today*.

The Israeli government of Ariel Sharon has made no bones about its support for the U.S. policy toward Baghdad. "It is a world interest, but especially

an American interest to attack Iraq," said Deputy Defense Minister and Labor Party member Weizman Shiry in late August.

Deputy Interior Minister Gideon Ezra said that a U.S. invasion would deal "a psychological blow" to the Palestinians and would "help Israel impose a new order, sans Arafat, in the Palestinian territories," reported the *Christian Science Monitor*: "The more aggressive the attack is, the more it will help Israel against the Palestinians," he said. "The understanding would be that what is good to do in Iraq, is also good for here."

Government officials have repeatedly stated that Israeli will use its armed forces if attacked.

"The Americans prefer that we not retaliate, but they don't understand that if we are hit, we have to retaliate," said one.

The Jordanian regime has expressed concern about the impact of a war on the already explosive situation in the occupied territories, and especially of the effect of any move by Tel Aviv to take advantage of the fighting to mount a renewed push against the Palestinians.

"The concern is that Sharon will push Palestinians over the border from the West Bank in order to increase the Jewishness of the West Bank"—already honeycombed with Israeli settlements—said Mustafa Hamarneh, director of the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan. Jordan's population is majority Palestinian.

New York City meeting

Communists and the World Struggle against Imperialism Today

Due to the last-minute cancellation of facilities, the September 28 meeting that has been advertised in the last two issues of the *Militant* is postponed. Please watch the *Militant* for details of new date and location.

Basques protest banning by Madrid

BY LAURA GARZA

MADRID, Spain—On September 14 tens of thousands of people poured into the streets of Bilbao, a major city in the Basque provinces, to oppose the Spanish government's move to ban the political party Batasuna, which backs independence for the Basque people.

"We are protesting against the loss of fundamental political freedoms in the Basque Country, stated Unai, a student demonstrator. "This protest shows that the people oppose the authoritarian policies of the Spanish government." Marchers stepped off behind a banner reading, "Long Live the Basque People" (Gora Euskal Herria) together with a large Basque flag.

Independence for the Basque region, which straddles territory in southern France and northern Spain, is widely supported in the region. The intransigent fight by Basques had been a thorn in the side of the Spanish government, which has consistently opposed this demand.

The protest came within weeks of an August 26 order by Spanish High Court judge Baltasar Garzón declaring Batasuna banned for three years, while an investigation is under way to justify a permanent ban by linking supporters of Batasuna with the illegal pro-independence group ETA (Basque Homeland and Freedom). Garzón issued orders to close offices of the political party, freeze bank accounts, and shut down taverns and other businesses in the Basque region. The order included a ban on protests by supporters of Batasuna.

Cops seek to break up march

The September 14 march, estimated to be between 30,000 and 50,000 people, greatly outnumbered the several hundred police seeking to disrupt it. The cops set up a barricade across the road at a point about halfway between the starting and ending



Tens of thousands of people have protested the banning of the Basque pro-independence party Batasuna. Above, September 8 march in support of Basque political prisoners.

points. When the demonstrators reached the barricade they were ordered to disperse. Shortly afterwards the police opened up on the crowd with high-powered water cannons, tear gas, and rubber bullets.

March leaders managed to address the crowd and most people then dispersed. Batasuna leader Arnaldo Otegi, one of those banned from publicly speaking, stated, "Today we have seen who is defending human rights. There will be new demonstrations and new opportunities. We ask that this

should end peacefully."

A week earlier, hundreds protested in Guernica September 8 against the policy of transferring Basque political prisoners to prisons far from the Basque region. The next day in San Sebastian, thousands marched behind a banner reading, "The Basque Country Needs Freedom." Spanish government officials complained that the Ertzaintza, the local Basque police, had not broken up these events. Prior to the September 14 action, the Basque regional au-

thorities agreed to hand a copy of Garzón's orders to the marchers. The Madrid government, however, demanded that the Ertzaintza be ordered to carry out the judge's order, and the Basque authorities complied.

These protest actions have deepened a schism between the capitalist parties ruling the Spanish state and the pro-independence bourgeois party in power in the Basque autonomous region. Officials in Madrid demanded an explanation of why the September 14 march had been allowed to take place. A spokesperson for Spanish prime minister José Maria Aznar's ruling Popular Party in the Basque region complained, "ETA-Batasuna gained their objectives, they brought more than 70 buses into Bilbao, gathered their people, occupied the streets of Bilbao for more than half an hour, and held a political act addressed by no less than Arnaldo Otegi." He demanded someone be held responsible for letting tens of thousands of people take to the streets.

In response, the Basque National Party, the ruling party in the Basque region, accused Judge Garzón of perverting justice by limiting the right to free speech, and threatened to sue the judge for usurping power that belongs to the Basque regional authorities. Basque officials have also refused to abide by an order to dissolve the grouping of Batasuna representatives in the parliament, where they hold seven of 75 seats.

Madrid's moves come in the context of the drive to war against Iraq and stepped up moves to justify repressive legislation on the basis of fighting terrorism. The government has recently proposed adding 10,000 troops to the streets under the guise of fighting delinquency, and has proposed an amendment to a law on foreigners that would allow the deportation of any immigrant found guilty of minor offenses. In the days leading up to the Bilbao march, Prime Minister Aznar told President George Bush, "We have strong reasons to support the United States," in its plans to attack Iraq, putting Spain at Britain's side in giving full backing to Washington's war.

Madrid is trying to use the war drive to push ahead with further measures aimed at limiting the rights of Basque activists. Previously, Spanish officials unsuccessfully tried to have Batasuna declared a terrorist group, thereby giving French and Belgian rulers a free hand in shutting down the offices of the party located in these countries. They hope to reintroduce such a proposal now that the group has been banned in Spain.

Meanwhile, the capitalist media here has given front-page coverage to a series of arrests in France of ETA members.

Jailing of U.S. citizens in 'al Qaeda' raid sparks outrage

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Six U.S. citizens of Yemeni descent remain in jail after three days of court hearings September 18-20 in which government prosecutors argued for denying them bail. They had been arrested several days earlier on the charge of providing "material support" to the al Qaeda organization. The judge said he would decide by October 3 whether to grant bail.

Despite government efforts to isolate and terrorize these six individuals, many have spoken out in their support, especially among the several thousand Yemeni immigrants who live in Lackawanna, New York. Reporting from the industrial town, one reporter noted that "many people say the government is trying to find the men guilty by association." Others argue that "the Lackawanna men have been cast as criminals because of their religion and their travels, not because of some crime they committed or even plotted to commit."

Some have pledged their houses and bank accounts to secure the release of the jailed men.

Justice Department officials admit that they have no knowledge that any of the men were planning a specific or imminent attack of any kind, or that any had weapons or had ever participated in a violent act.

The prosecutors' arguments revolve around the fact that the six men traveled to Pakistan in the spring of 2001 to study Islam, and the statement by two of them that they spent some time in Afghanistan. Also put forward as "evidence" is an e-mail message sent July 18, 2002, by Mukhtar al Bakri, one of the defendants, entitled "The Big Meal," in which he wrote, "The next meal will be very large" and "this thing will be very strong."

Bakri was seized and beaten by police in Bahrain at a party celebrating his wedding. The cops "kicked in the door, ran him to the ground, beat him and threw him in prison,"

stated Bakri's lawyer, John Molloy. He was then turned over to the FBI for an interrogation in which the U.S. federal police got him to state that he had been to Afghanistan.

The case against the six U.S. citizens is being organized at the highest levels of the Justice Department, according to reports in the capitalist media. In a highly unusual move in a federal case, the six men are being held simply on the basis of a criminal complaint. Normal procedure is for an indictment to be handed down after secret grand jury proceedings. Then, and only then, would the defendants be arrested.

Instead, government officials simply incarcerated the men, orchestrated a frenzied campaign in the big-business media aimed at justifying this trampling on their constitutional rights, and only now will present their case to a grand jury.

In another development, the U.S. immigration police has been instructed starting October 1 to register and keep tabs on all men ages 16 to 45 who enter the United States from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Yemen.

The previous month the Justice Department began applying this regulation to visitors from Iran, Iraq, Sudan, and Libya. Individuals are required to provide fingerprints, photographs, and details about their stay in the United States. Registration is required on arrival or departure. Those staying longer than a month must be interviewed at an immigration office and notify the INS within 10 days of any change of residence, employment, or academic institution.

In the first lawsuit of its kind, Hady Hassan Omar, originally from Egypt, who was arrested and held in detention for 73 days in the wake of the September 11 attacks, has filed a lawsuit against the U.S. government over the mistreatment he suffered in a Louisiana prison.

Omar, 23, from Fayetteville, Arkansas,

who is married to a U.S. citizen, was detained by FBI agents because he had purchased an airline ticket on the same Kinko's computer that was used by one of the airline hijackers. Omar states that he was subjected to numerous invasive body cavity searches, interrogations, harassment and ridicule by the guards, was refused contact with a lawyer, and was not allowed to pray or eat according to Islamic traditions. After the authorities failed to pin a "terrorist" charge on him, they then charged Omar with overstaying his tourist visa.

Phone workers march for pay equity

BY PAM OWEN

MARKHAM, Ontario—More than 1,000 people marched here September 7 demanding that Bell Canada offer women operators a settlement in a pay equity dispute that has lasted more than 10 years. The action was part of a day-long event organized by the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) called a "Festival of Fairness for Women @ Bell."

Union supporters picketed and leafleted the Markham golf course, where Bell Canada was sponsoring the Canadian Open golf tournament. A police barricade forced the protesters to halt about two-thirds of a mile from the event.

Francine Clément, a telephone operator who has worked at Bell in Montreal for 23 years and one of 40 unionists who came from Montreal, noted the "different generations" present. A range of unions was represented at the action.

"We're entitled to that money. We're not begging," said Ann Newman, a former CEP official and retired phone operator, to the crowd.

The CEP has been pressing for a wage increase for telephone operators at the com-

pany since 1995, arguing that the mostly women workers are substantially underpaid in comparison to technicians, who are overwhelmingly male. Operators earn around Can\$35,000 (Can\$1=US 63 cents) a year, almost \$20,000 below the technicians' base salary.

Supporters of the union's case point to a 1999 victory for government workers. At that time, a federal court decision ordered the Canadian government to pay up to \$3.6 billion to 230,000 current and former government workers represented by the Public Service Alliance.

Since 1993 the company has slashed the number of Bell Canada operators from around 5,000 to 400 by forming a low-paying joint venture called Nordia. The company's call centers offer work for "half the wages, very little benefits and no union," said Alison, who used to work as a Bell operator before her job was eliminated in 1999.

The CEP represents about 25 percent of the claimants. On September 4, Bell agreed to pay out \$178 million to 29,000 clerical and sales workers covered by the Telecommunications Employees Union. The offer was not made to the CEP.